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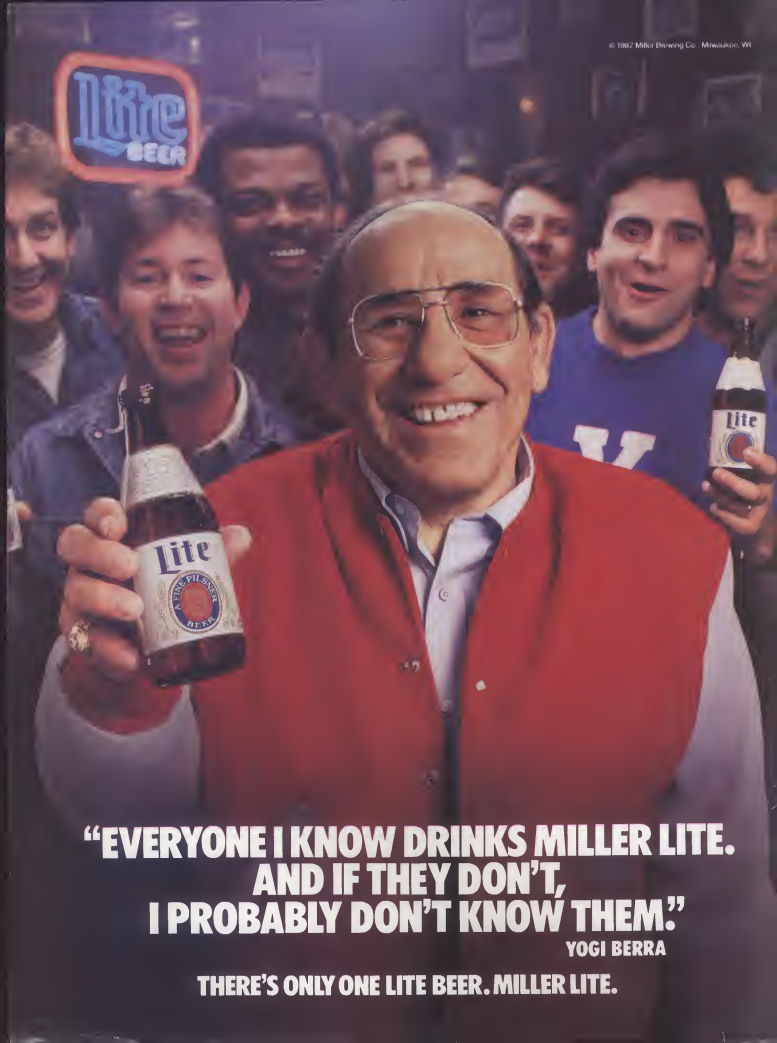
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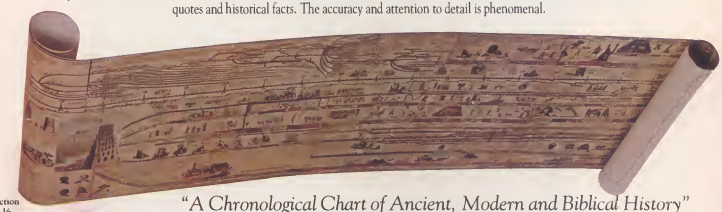

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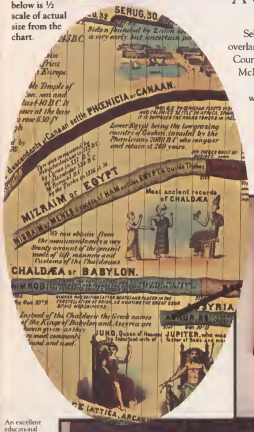

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World War II

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COVER: German infantry and a tank are seen in the invasion of France in 1940, the very zenith of the high tide of Nazi conquest in Western Europe. Despite popular belief, however, Germany didn't occupy all of defeated France at once. A pro-German French government remained in power holding territory under the Tricolor at Vichy. This state—under the rule of Marshal Philippe Pétain—existed until the Allies invaded North Africa in November 1942. (Story, Page 34). ABOVE: Five years after Hitler entered Paris like a tourist, the tables had turned on the Third Reich, whose powerful Siegfried Line and its concrete tank obstacles were breached by the Western Allies in their own invasion of the Rhineland.

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It's about time someone took action to memoralize the single greatest military action in World War II, the Battle for Guadalcanal. It will remain in military history as an action as significant as the battles of Gettysburg and Waterloo. Moreover the Guadalcanal Campaign was a six month intense bloody land struggle, vicious air battles and a series of the most deadly Naval actions in modern times. Guadalcanal not only brought the invading forces to an abrupt halt but initiated their destruction.

To memorialize the Marines, Navy, Army, Air Force, and our Allies, plans are being made for a showcase tour of such battle sites as Henderson Field, Red Beach, Ilu River Delta, Bloody Ridge, Mt. Austen, Matanikau River, Cape Esperance, and other key areas. For example, the Pagoda will be rebuilt as a snack shop-bar at the Honiara Hotel's beach.

In addition, the Medal of Honor awardees for valor at Guadalcanal will be memorialized on brass plaques to be placed at Henderson Field, the rebuilt Pagoda, and aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Guadalcanal. In addition all ships sunk to Iron Bottom Bay will be honored in a similar manner. Most of all a very impressive monument will be placed at Bloody Ridge, a memorial of such beauty and grace that it will attract world attention. Finally, private funds will be used to build a United States memorial, approved (but not funded) by our Congress, in Honiara near Point Cruz.

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The famous photo taken at Iwo Jima was not staged—but neither was that the first flag on Suribachi.

The first American flag raised upon the crest of Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima was a small one—54 by 28 inches. It was carried "aloft," as it were, by members of 1st. Lt. Harold Schrier's platoon, Second Battalion, 28th Marines, on D-Day plus four at the instigation of the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Chandler Johnson.

Bill D. Ross, the Marine combat correspondent who contributed our Iwo Jima story (Page 19) and himself was on bloody Iwo, tells the story.

The heavily defended Suribachi was strangely quiet as Schrier, his 40-man platoon and Sergeant Louis R. Lowery, a staff photographer for *Leatherneck*, the official Marine Corps magazine, made their climb. At the rim of the dormant volcano, though, they engaged in a short skirmish with Japanese defenders hidden in caves.

"While the melee was at its height, two men—Corporal Robert Leader and Private First Class Leo J. Rozek—had found a seven-foot length of iron pipe from a rainwater cistern, and they had attached the flag to it."

But that's not the end of the story. For one thing, Colonel Johnson, watching from the foot of Suribachi, had a new thought. "Some s.o.b.," he said, "is going to want that flag as a souvenir, but he's not going to get it. That's our flag." In minutes, relates Ross, a lisping corporal called "Wabbit" was sent scampering to the beach to find a new flag.

Meanwhile, Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal also had been watching. While "Wabbit" was on his errand, Rosenthal set out for the summit of Suribachi to see about a panoramic shot of the besieged island. He was accompanied by two Marine photographers, Private Robert Campbell, a still photographer, and Sergeant William Genaust, a motion-picture cameraman.

A sergeant dispatched to the summit with the new flag and the three photographers all arrived close together. As Ross tells the tale:

"The new flag—twice the size of the original, measuring eight feet by four feet, eight inches—was quickly lashed to a longer length of pipe. Six men were having trouble shoving it into the rubble. The photographers watched for several seconds and then scurried for positions to shoot the action.

"Rosenthal frantically piled rocks to get better elevation to make his picture. He focused, and the Speed Graphic's shutter clicked just as the struggling Marines hoisted the new flag.

"Rosenthal's negatives were flown to Guam that night along with the day's output of copy and photos from correspondents covering the action. When they were processed, darkroom technicians knew in a flash that Rosenthal's Suribachi photo was very, very special. It didn't fit the formula of a conventional news picture—the face of only one man was clearly visible, the rest were either hidden by hands and arms raising the flag, or their heads were turned.

"But it was a masterpiece of composition and lighting that captured the mood of the unfolding drama on Iwo Jima. Its stagelike setting and powerful position of the men gave it the graven look of a posed statue—so much so, in fact, that cynics suggested the photo was staged.

"Next day, the photo was on the front page of virtually every newspaper in the States, and it became an instant symbol for millions on the homefront—an indelible portrait of patriotism and determination.

"The picture won the 1945 Pulitzer Prize. It later was reproduced on a U.S. postage stamp and was re-created in minute detail as the world's largest bronze statue, the memorial that now stands adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery in Washington.

"Bill Genaust never saw what he shot; he was killed a few days later making more footage of Marines in battle. But millions saw his film in movie theaters across the nation. Lou Lowery, the *Leatherneck* photographer who made pictures of the first flag-raising, received scant attention for his work, as did Bob Campbell."

And so, the true story behind possibly the entire war's most famous photograph.

C.B.K.

After having shot the most famous photo of World War II, AP photographer Joe Rosenthal (left) chats with fellow lensman George Burns of Yank *magazine atop conquered Mount Suribachi.*

World War II

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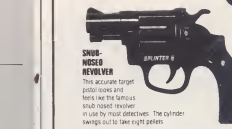

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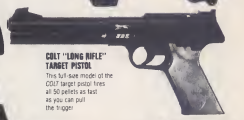

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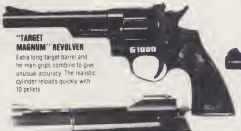

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It was a short but spectacularly successful undercover career—for Lance Corporal Adolf Hitler.

By David T. Zabecki

In the world of covert operations, some operations fail, and some succeed—all too well. During the early years of this century the German Army tinkered with two key operations that would prove haunting in the end. Both, ironically, involved General Erich Ludendorff, the man who was for many the personification of the German Army.

In early 1917, Ludendorff gave his approval to the proposed transport of Nikolai Lenin, then in exile in Switzerland, to Petrograd. The reasoning was clear enough. The more revolutionary disturbance Lenin created in Russia, the more troops Ludendorff could shift from the eastern front to the western front. Lenin might even succeed in overthrowing the Czar's government and take Russia completely out of the war. And it worked. It's doubtful, however, that the success was much comfort to the troops of General Paulus' Sixth Army at Stalingrad 25 years later. Would the Soviet regime have come into being in Russia anyway? Perhaps. But the fact still remains, it did come into being with Ludendorff's help.

Ludendorff also approved another covert operation that succeeded too well and set off a chain of events that eventually led to the destruction of the entire German nation. This operation, instead of involving a fiery revolutionary already known throughout the world, involved an obscure foreigner in the German Army—a pathetically disheveled Austrian lance corporal in a Bavarian infantry regiment.

When World War I erupted in 1914, Adolft Hitler was living in a rented room in Munich. He was still an Austrian citizen (and would remain one right up until 1932), but he was so fired up by the war fever that he petitioned the King of Bavaria for permission to enlist. Permission was granted: On August 16, 1914, he enlisted in the 16th Bavarian *Landeswehr* (List) Infantry Regiment.

The man at right with the handlebar moustache is Lance Corporal Adolf Hitler, seen here late in 1918 at the Pasewalk Military Hospital, where he was recovering from being gassed in combat.

Hitler served in the 16th Regiment through all four years of World War I. During World War II it was the popular belief outside Germany that he never actually earned the Iron Cross First Class he was always pictured wearing. The truth is that he not only won that decoration, but almost every other award available to enlisted men at that time. His other decorations included the Iron Cross Second Class, the Military Cross 3rd Class with Swords, the Service Medal 3rd Class, the Regimental Diploma for outstanding bravery, and the Wound Badge. He was a good frontline soldier, but in four years of combat he never rose above the rank of lance corporal because his officers felt he had no leadership ability.

The war ended for Hitler on the morning of October 14, 1918, when he was blinded by gas. While he was recuperating in the hospital, the Kaiser abdicated, Germany surrendered and left-wing revolutions sprang up all over Germany. At the end of November he was discharged from the hospital and ordered to report to his regiment in Munich. When he arrived, he found Bavaria and its capital in the hands of a socialist government. Not knowing what else to do with himself, Hitler checked into the regimental barracks on Türkenstrasse, also in the hands of a revolutionary soldiers' council. Hitler docilely donned the required red brassard of the Revolutionary Army.

There is no record that Hitler took any part in the political upheavals in Munich in late 1918 and early 1919. In January, he volunteered for guard duty at a prisoner-of-war camp in Traunstein. When the last POWs were sent home, he returned to Munich and was assigned to a detail sorting gas masks. In February a revolt replaced the socialist government with a communist one and a soviet republic was proclaimed in Bavaria. Still, Hitler went with the flow.

Under the Treaty of Versailles, the standing Germany Army (the *Reichswehr*) was limited to a token 100,000-man force. The Army got around the treaty by supporting (with money, equipment and advisors) private paramilitary groups known as *Freikorps* (Free Corps). The *Freikorps* were almost all aligned with the political right, and when the end for the leftest movements in Bavaria came, it was at the hands of the *Freikorps*, with *Reichswehr* support.

On Palm Sunday 1919, an attempted right-wing putsch was put down in Munich, but it started a chain of events that sent a combined *Reichwehr-Freikorps* force under General Ritter von

Continued on page 54

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While the fate of France was settled elsewhere, the great fortification remained ready for battle, inviolate . . . unused.

By Thomas J. Deakin

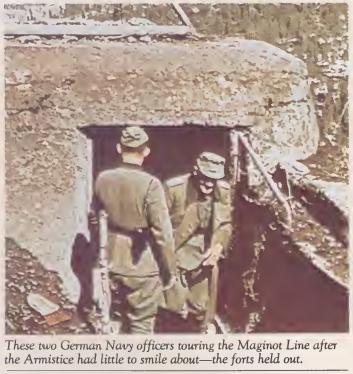
To a visiting British officer, it was "more like a submarine than anything except a submarine I've ever been in." To proud *Luftwaffe* officers come to see the damage they had wrought, it was a source of disappointment and frustration. To the French, for all its wondrous physical endowments, it proved only an expensive mirage.

Hammered by the most powerful of German artillery, it did remain inviolate to the end, however. And it did serve the purpose of drawing the British into the conflict as an ally of France and Belgium. . . .

Some years before, when the French Parliament met to consider the Versailles Treaty after World War I, one member in particular was worried about the future. "We are always the invaded," he lamented. "We are always the ones to suffer, we are always the ones to be sacrificed . . . . this treaty does not provide certainties . . . in respect of security."

The delegate, a crippled ex-sergeant, was André Maginot. Although he was born in Paris, André Maginot's family home was in the Lorraine, next to Germany. Educated as a lawyer, Maginot was elected to the French Parliament in 1910. For six months in 1913-14, he served as Under Secretary of State for War. Under French law, he could not serve in both Parliament and the Army. With the advent of war in 1914, he chose the Army, and for conspicuous bravery he later was promoted to corporal and then sergeant.

After the war, he was determined that never again would Lorraine be subjected to invasion—a vow that would be the genesis of what came to be known as the Maginot Line. Maginot returned to Parliament (he served in 26 cabinets from 1920 until he died in 1932), and he served both as French Minister of War and of Pensions.



These two German Navy officers touring the Maginot Line after the Armistice had little to smile about—the forts held out.

Maginot was able to effect a compromise between two schools of French military thought. On one side, Marshal Henri Pétain advocated a "battlefield prepared in peacetime," a continuous pre-prepared trench line, but Marshal Joseph Joffre wanted a series of underground fortresses with mobile troops protecting the spaces in between. Pétain also felt that France's northern frontier could "only be defended by advancing into Belgium." The compromise resulting was a defensive "wall" along the eastern frontier of France.

Why couldn't a matching defensive "wall" be built to the north, too? The public French answer was, basically, that northern neighbor Belgium was a friendly, and neutral, nation. A French industrial area crowded the Belgian border with no space left for any depth of fortification. Finally, the flat terrain on the Belgium border presented no cover for hidden fortresses, and the water table prevented underground construction.

If the building of the defensive line to the east caused the Germans to violate Belgian neutrality again, as in World War I, Britain surely would come to the assistance of Belgium—thus entering any war as an ally of the French. And who could blame the French politicians for that?

History and geography made the French fear that the next generation of Germans would seek a war of revenge. The Franco-Prussian War in 1870 was a decisive defeat for France; Germany imposed harsh terms—a huge indemnity and the loss of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. At the end of WW I, the two provinces were returned to France—but now, how to protect them from any new German aggression? No French government that decided to abandon them at the outbreak of war could long survive, given the country's turbulent political climate. Thus, the French High Command was faced with a political and industrial imperative—the defense of Alsace and Lorraine on their very borders with Germany. The answer must take into account the country's much-reduced male population, a factor stemming from the tremendous casualties of WW I. A prepared battlefield—or line of fortifications—would lessen the number of troops needed.

Thus, the Maginot Line, the most extensive of the permanent fortifications built in Europe between World Wars I and II. Built along 200 miles of Franco-German border, the Maginot Line consisted of huge underground fortresses emplaced four to six miles behind the frontier with Germany, topped with artillery turrets that raised for firing.

Considerations for basing the fortifications were natural cover, sites nearby for observation posts, allowances for

Continued on page 61

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Resorting to Japanese tactics, Robert Eichelberger was MacArthur's best field commander in the Pacific.

By John F. Shortal

In the sweltering heat of the late afternoon on November 30, 1942, Douglas MacArthur paced the veranda of his headquarters on the island of New Guinea. Sweat soaked the back of his khaki shirt from neck to waist as he pensively smoked his pipe. He was in deep trouble. His first major offensive of the war was an abysmal failure. He had sent an ill-prepared and untrained American division into combat against battle-hardened Japanese veterans at Buna, along the Papuan coast of New Guinea. The Japanese had prepared formidable defensive positions there, and the American soldiers had suffered heavy casualties without even denting the perimeter. So poorly had the Americans performed, that the Australians operating on the U.S. left flank had even expressed doubt to MacArthur about the inherent fighting qualities of American soldiers.

Little-known today, the object of MacArthur's fulsome praise masterminded dozens of Pacific amphibious operations.

MacArthur's options were severely limited. Logistically, New Guinea was far from the industrial might of the United States. There were no landing craft for an amphibious landing, and he had no tanks in the region. MacArthur had a single additional American division standing by in Australia, also ill-prepared for combat. MacArthur was convinced, however, that the battle for Buna could still be won—the right man, he believed, could yet overcome the various American shortcomings and salvage a victory from the quagmire of New Guinea. MacArthur had sent to Australia for the only man in the theater he believed capable of obtaining that elusive victory—Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger.

At 7 o'clock that evening, General Eichelberger walked onto the veranda of MacArthur's New Guinea headquarters. At first glance, he certainly did not look impressive. At six feet, one inch, he weighed 192 pounds, a good deal of his weight centered in his middle. He looked more like a school teacher than the dynamic commander just then needed to lead men in desperate battle.

MacArthur's greeting was terse and to the point. He briefly described the tactical situation at Buna and then looked Eichelberger in the eye and gave the following order: "Take Buna or don't come back alive!" With that statement, Eichelberger was dismissed. The following morning he departed for the front.

Who was Eichelberger? What made him so special? Or was he? These were two questions asked by MacArthur's staff—and the soldiers at Buna whose lives now would depend on the new man's judgment.

Robert Eichelberger was born in Urbana, Ohio, on March 9, 1886. He attended Ohio State University for two years in an effort to follow in his father's footsteps and become a lawyer. His career plans changed in 1905, however, when he was offered an appointment to West Point. He graduated in 1909 with one of the most distinguished classes in the history of the Military Academy. Twenty-six of the 102 members of his class later would reach general officer rank. The illustrious group included George Patton (Third Army), Jacob Devers (6th Army Group), William Simpson (Ninth Army), as well as Eichelberger.

In his 30 years of Army service before World War II, Eichelberger developed a unique style of leadership. His method of motivating soldiers evolved through the myriad of assignments that an officer is given as his career takes him from second lieutenant to three-star general. His leadership was not predicated on showmanship, but rather on a genuine concern for the health and well-being of his enlisted men. In Eichelberger's case, too, an essential ingredient of leadership was the fact that he always led by example and shared the dangers and hardships of his men. In peacetime, this took the form of standing in the rain at breakfast formation to show that the plight of his men was known to him. In combat, he continually placed himself at the most crucial and dangerous locations. And now he was headed for a most difficult combat assignment.

Buna developed as one of the most controversial battles fought in the Pacific in World War II. It also was MacArthur's first offensive of the war. He had decided to seize the initiative in the fall of 1942 and to clear the Japanese out of Eastern New Guinea. If he could eliminate the Japanese garrison at Buna, Port Moresby and the logistical lifeline between the United States and Australia would be secured. When MacArthur decided to under-

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take his ambitious offensive, however, he had few assets at his disposal. He had only two American divisions in Australia, and neither was prepared for the rigors of jungle warfare.

The unit MacArthur selected to destroy the Japanese garrison at Buna was the 32nd Division, a National Guard unit from Wisconsin and Michigan which had recently been filled with 5,000 new recruits. The Guardsmen had had no jungle training and only one night-training problem in the 20 months before their division was deployed for combat. The 32nd's soldiers simply were not prepared for battle. They had expected an extended conditioning period in Australia, but that expectation failed to materialize before their commitment to Buna. Even worse, MacArthur seriously had underestimated the strength of the Japanese in Eastern New Guinea. He had anticipated that there were only 1,500 largely sick Japanese troops in the region. In reality, there were 8,000 (2,500 of them located at Buna). The Japanese troops awaiting the Americans, moreover, were veterans of China and Malaya; they had prepared an elaborate bunker complex in the jungle around Buna. Their bunkers could only be destroyed by tanks, flamethrowers, or a direct hit from a 105mm howitzer. Unfortunately, the 32nd Division deployed to New Guinea without any of those weapons.

As might be expected, the poorly trained and ill-equipped division was stopped cold by the Japanese. During the last two weeks of November 1942, the casualties mounted, while the division commanders vainly sought some way to destroy the stubborn bunkers.

As soon as Eichelberger arrived, he saw that the Americans were disorganized, demoralized and, in some cases, nearly starving to death. He called a two-day halt in the fighting. He relieved incompetent commanders and replaced them with men he trusted. He then rested and fed the soldiers while he gave his new leadership time to sort out the situation at the front. A senior Australian general described Eichelberger's arrival at Buna as a "breath of fresh air."

In his first attack, on December 5, 1942, he was able to break through the Japanese defenses—the Americans' first success at Buna. Small as it was, the victory earned Eichelberger a great deal of credibility with the Australians and his own boss, MacArthur. He used this relationship to obtain the equipment (tanks and flamethrowers) he needed to neutralize the Japanese bunkers.

Eichelberger destroyed the Japanese garrison at Buna in just 32 days. During this period, he set an extraordinary example of courage and personal leadership. One of his subordinates later told him: "While I was with you I was convinced that if the troops under your command did not go into Buna, you would have unhesitatingly gone in there alone." Eichelberger was always at the front to share the hardships and dangers with his men. (So were his subordinate commanders; of the four general officers at the front, only Eichelberger was not seriously wounded.)

Eichelberger was profoundly affected by his experience at Buna. During the tough fighting there, he promised himself that he would never again lead untrained American soldiers in battle. The next time, he vowed, it would be the Japanese worrying about facing combat veterans. He wanted the enemy to know fear, but to accomplish that goal, he had to develop a realistic training program. Many of the Americans who had died at Buna had not been prepared for battle. After Buna, Eichelberger instituted a harsh and demanding training program for his new I Corps (the 24th and 41st Divisions) in Australia, a regime lasting from February 1943 to April 1944. The training program emphasized phys-

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ical conditioning, night patrolling and constant maneuvering in the jungle. He emphasized squad, platoon, company and battalion exercises in which everyone fired their weapons, including artillery. Eichelberger also stressed mental conditioning to prepare his men for combat.

Throughout 1943, as Eichelberger prepared the I Corps for battle, MacArthur conducted his series of brilliant operations in the Southwest Pacific which cut the Japanese line of communication to Rabaul on northern New Britain Island. This enabled him to neutralize the Japanese forces at the major base without the cost of a bloody frontal assault against it. By January 1944, however, MacArthur had moved only 240 miles north of Buna—and he still had 2,240 miles to go before reaching Manila for his return to the Philippines. At that pace, it would have taken MacArthur another ten years to achieve his promised return. In order to speed up the advance, MacArthur decided to move 600 miles up the coast of New Guinea in a single amphibious operation in April 1944. His objective was to seize the airfields and natural harbor at Hollandia. To ensure the success of this operation, MacArthur selected his best field commander—Eichelberger.

Major General Robert L. Eichelberger (right) on October 31, 1941, with Brigadier General Rene E. deR. Hoyle.

After 14 long months of training troops in Australia, Eichelberger once again was assigned the theater's most important and difficult operation. But this time, at Hollandia, he went into battle with troops he had trained himself, the 24th and 41st Divisions.

The demanding training program devised by Eichelberger after Buna proved a resounding success at Hollandia. The landings on 22 April 1944 were flawless. The Japanese were completely surprised and were never able to gain the initiative or to reconstruct their line of defense in the face of the vigorous advance by the American infantry. Neither the difficult terrain nor the enemy slowed the advance. As the Americans relentlessly and aggressively pushed to their objectives, it took only five days for Eichelberger's troops to seize the Japanese airfields and end the tactical phase of the operation. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall later described the operation as a "model of strategical and tactical maneuver."

Six weeks later, MacArthur again had to send for Eichelberger to salvage a desperate tactical situation. On May 27, 1944, MacArthur landed a division on the island of Biak with the mission of seizing its vital airstrips. However, the Japanese once more were in much greater strength on the island than MacArthur's intelligence reports had indicated. By June 15, the assaulting division was still on the beach and had failed to secure any of the airfields. MacArthur's staff, meanwhile, prematurely had announced the island was secure.

As hoped, Eichelberger was able to solve the tactical dilemma and salvage MacArthur's reputation—in less than one week. He proved conclusively that

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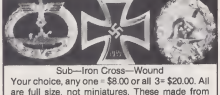

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he was the *non pareil* of tacticians in the theater. As soon as he arrived on Biak, he went to the front to assess the situation. Recalling his experience at Buna, Eichelberger decided against direct seizeure of the airfields by a frontal assault. Instead, he planned an attack that would flow around the Japanese positions and occupy the high ground to their rear. When executed, his plan resulted in complete victory, at a minimum cost to American lives.

For his part, incidentally, Eichelberger credited the Japanese with providing the solution for cracking their own defenses. Having carefully examined all their operations of World War II, he saw that Japanese tactics used in Malaya were just the method needed to end the stalemate on Biak. In Malaya, each time the British forces prepared a defensive line, the Japanese enveloped it. Once the British discovered that the Japanese were in their rear, the whole defensive line collapsed and the British drew back to establish another. This process was repeated down the entire Malaya peninsula. Eichelberger believed that the Japanese perimeter at Biak would break when the enemy found Americans were in their rear. He was proven quite correct.

General MacArthur was so impressed by Eichelberger's innovative tactics and dynamic leadership at Biak that he rewarded him with command of the New Eighth American Army, and Eichelberger then commanded the Eighth Army in combat for almost a full year. During this period, Eighth Army conducted 55 amphibious assaults—each one successful. Yet, while orchestrating these many diverse operations, the commander still found time to take a personal interest in his soldiers. Eichelberger was a highly sensitive man with a warm sense of humor. One of his soldiers described him as a grandfather-like personality. He talked to his men before they went into action. Then, he was continually present with them, sharing their danger, during the fighting. After an operation, Eichelberger took ice cream to the wounded and conducted numerous award ceremonies to decorate his soldiers for their courage. The effectiveness of his leadership is evidenced by the fact that his troops never failed to accomplish any mission.

As the gathering Pacific campaign eventually did reach the Philippines, a major reason for the success of the Eighth Army in the extended figl.ting there was, again, Eichelberger's demanding training program. As he had with the I Corps, Eichelberger sought

to give his soldiers every advantage before entering combat, especially in small-unit training. (Between November 1944 and May 1945, 35 of the 51 amphibious assaults conducted by the Eighth Army were executed by small units of less than battalion size.) Despite adverse conditions, the troops trained by Eichelberger never failed to seize any assigned objective.

Eichelberger's West Point classmate George S. Patton once wrote him! "In my limited experience with amphibious attacks, I found them the most dangerous form of sport yet devised. If I should be so fortunate, I am going to sit at your feet and learn how to do it."

Eichelberger merely continued his innovative tactics as Eighth Army commander. His experience at Buna had taught him how tenacious the Japanese soldier could be in defense of his positions. At Buna and Biak, he found that tactically the American infantry was slow and had "a tendency to wait around for the artillery." Eichelberger's tactical operations therefore were characterized by speed. He believed that once contact was made, it must be "maintained until the enemy was either dispersed or annihilated." He refused to allow his subordinate commanders to adopt what he called "the sit-still and patrol method" of operating. Lives were saved by speed. Therefore, he sought to break the enemy's front and to destroy him before he could reconstitute his defenses. This technique proved successful on the 80 islands he captured. And as an army commander, he avoided costly frontal attacks by employing the same Japanese envelopment tactics that had proven so successful at Biak.

On Mindanao in the Philippines, he repeated this technique against the Japanese with devastating effect. There, his troops marched 100 miles through dense jungle and seized Davao City, his main objective, from the rear. MacArthur's staff had predicted that it would take several months to accomplish the mission, but Eichelberger's troops achieved it in only two weeks. General MacArthur subsequently summed up his opinion of Eichelberger and the Eighth Army when he said, "no army of this war has achieved greater glory and distinction than the Eighth."

On August 30, 1945, Eichelberger assumed command of the Army of Occupation in Japan. In 1948 he retired from the Army. On September 26, 1961, Eichelberger died in Asheville, N.C. Virtually unknown today, in the crucible of combat he was always successful. He was MacArthur's best field commander. □

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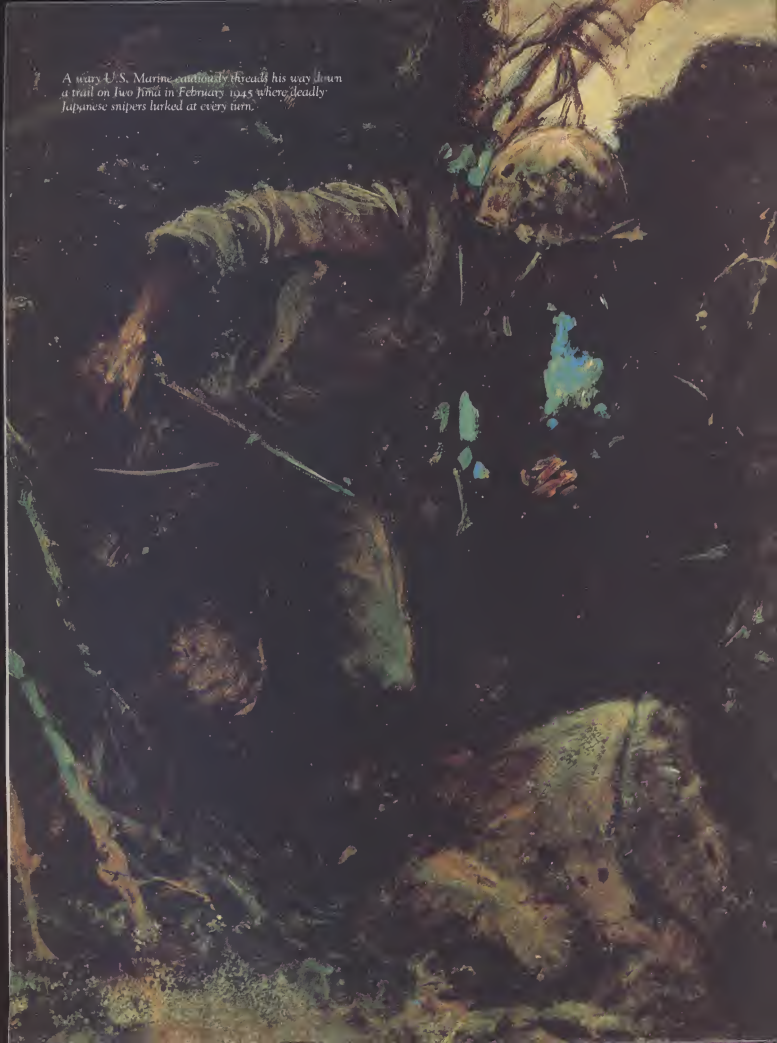

A wary U.S. Marine cautiously threads his way down a trail on Iwo Jima in February 1945 where deadly Japanese snipers lurked at every turn.

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World War II

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By Bill D. Ross

Pearl Harbor, in early fall of 1944, bristled with military might marshalling for the climactic battles in the conquest of Japan. And on September 7—thirty-three months to the day since the Japanese attack that catapulted the United States into World War II—Admiral Chester William Nimitz assembled his admirals and generals to make final plans for the invasion of Iwo Jima.

Meeting with Nimitz was his first team: the coterie of hard and tested battle commanders who had made the long trek northward through the Pacific since the darkest days of Guadalcanal and had won an unbroken chain of victories.

Rear Admiral Raymond A. Spruance would command the battle. Known as the "quiet admiral" because of a disdain for publicity, Spruance was Nimitz's closest confidant and his chief planner. Cool, remote and unflappable, he inspired respect rather than affection. He relished the role as the right hand to CinCPac—Commander-in-Chief, Pacific—Nimitz's official title.

Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner would be in tactical command under Spruance. Kelly Turner was the hard-driving, three-star ramrod of the operation, a job he had done in every major Marine landing beginning at Guadalcanal. Rough, tough, aggressive and abrasive, he was "Terrible Turner" to his junior officers and enlisted men.

And there was Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, who would command the Marines once they had landed. He was "Howlin' Mad" Smith in the headlines, news stories and often-harsh editorials back home, as well as to the troops of the Fleet Marine Force who fought the battles. "My Marines," as he invariably called them, were devoted to

Before and after every campaign, "Howlin' Mad" went to the mat with Nimitz, Spruance and Turner about pre-invasion naval bombardment and air support—or the lack of it. "If the Marines had received better cooperation from the Navy our casualties would have been lower," he said in a savage and blunt condemnation of Navy brass after the war. "More naval gunfire would have saved many lives," he declared. "I had to beg for gunfire, and I rarely received what the situation called for."

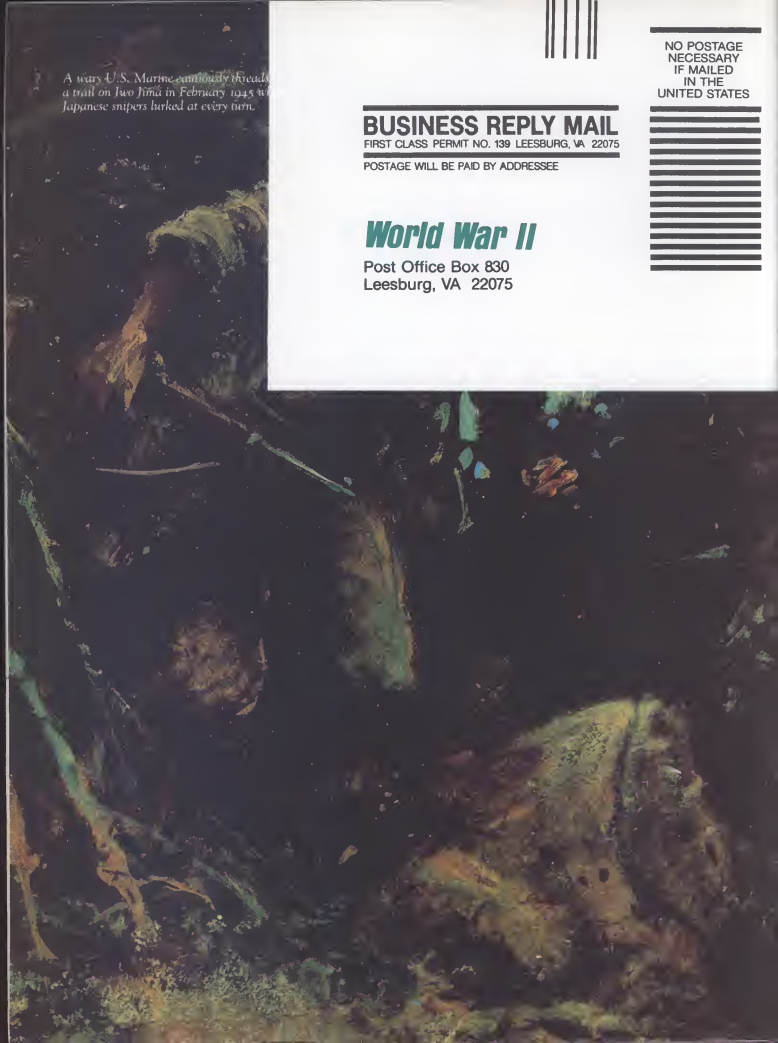
If Smith were often at loggerheads with Nimitz, the chasm was not just over pre-invasion bombardment and air support. It also reflected bitter personality conflicts and steaming interservice rivalaries. Smith believed Nimitz and his admirals personified an ingrained Navy state of mind that looked down on the smaller Marine Corps as a poor relative.

The general didn't hide his feelings. Any hint of deception was totally foreign to his character and beneath the dignity of an officer and gentleman, this one a devout Methodist from Alabama. Nimitz was stung deeply by Smith's outbursts; he resented them and thought the general often hit below the belt. But he abided "Howlin' Mad" Smith as General Eisenhower did the peccadilloes of "Blood 'n Guts" George Patton in Europe, and for the same reason. Both were fighting generals who could and did win battles when the chips were down.

Nimitz had assembled his commanders on September 7 for the final war council before D-Day at Iwo. In a soft voice more suited to a wood-paneled corporate board room than the map-covered combat nerve center at Pearl Harbor, the admiral reviewed the battle plan.

General Smith chomped an unlit cigar, pale blue eyes impassive behind gold-rimmed glasses, as Nimitz ran down a check list of radio intercepts, intelligence reports and late reconnaissance photos, taken both from aircraft and submarine periscopes.

Those confirmed a frantic Japanese build-up of Iwo's already formidable defenses. Then Nimitz emphasized that the entire operation, slated for early 1945, had to mesh with General MacArthur's final push to retake the Philippines, and it must dovetail with landings on Okinawa slated for the first week in April. Because of those operations—all demanding heavy commitments of battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers and destroyers—the Admiral said the Navy couldn't pound Iwo Jima with



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Volcanic Island's Bitter Cost

The Marines at Iwo Jima took everything the Japanese could throw at them, but the casualties were grim evidence of how tough the enemy stronghold was. Not only Mount Suribachi's honeycombed slopes, but the mid-island "Meat Grinder" chewed up the determined Marine forces at every attempt to advance.

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The airfields were the prime objectives of the Allied landings shown at lower right. The two lines above were both breached by the Marines.

absolutely maximum, all-out bombardment before the Marines hit the beaches.

One of Nimitz's staff recalled glancing at "Howlin' Mad" at the moment. "The general scowled and slowly removed his glasses with one hand and the cigar with the other," the staff member told a friend years late, "and began speaking with his slow Southern drawl."

"This will be the bloodiest battle in Marine Corps history," Smith said in a low voice, looking straight at Nimitz. "We'll catch seven kinds of hell on the beaches, and that will be just the beginning." He brushed squinting eyes and replaced his glasses. "The fighting will be fierce, and the casualties will be awful, but my Marines will take the damned island."

There was dead silence. The war room seethed with tension. The general still glared at the admiral. "How much bombardment will we get before H-Hour?" Smith wanted to know.

Nimitz turned to Spruance for the answer. "Three days," he said. Surprisingly, there was no explosion from "Howlin' Mad." But his face flushed, and he bristled with controlled rage as his glare shifted to Spruance. "Damn it, Ray, three days won't do the job." The words came out softly: "I need at least ten days of battleships and cruisers and carriers blasting everything on the island with everything they can fire. Otherwise the carnage will be unbelievable. God knows our losses will be horrible regardless of what we do."

Spruance didn't respond. Nimitz remained impassive. The matter was out of their hands. There was little, if anything, they could do. Nimitz said he would ask the Joint Chiefs to hold off D-Day for 30 days beyond the now-scheduled January 20th. That might allow time for more air bombardment, but it would not free any more naval gunfire. There simply wasn't any more to be had, Nimitz said.

"Howlin' Mad" accepted the inevitable. The Marines would have to do what they must do: take the beachhead, and the island, with whatever support they could get. General Smith would again suffer the blasts and epithets of newspaper editorials and be accused of wasting lives. He would carry to his grave the bitter conclusion that ten days of shelling and more carrier-based bombardment would have saved thousands of American lives on the tiny Pacific island of Iwo Jima.

There was, however, a smidgen of good news as the Marines boarded ships for the invasion. Admiral Nimitz had asked the Joint Chiefs to postpone D-Day for one month. They had agreed, but this decision was final. Iwo Jima would be invaded on February 19, 1945.

Came the appointed day, and a soft, seven-knot breeze from the north barely rippled the turquoise sea. A few scattered clouds dotted the brightening skies as dawn spread across the horizon. If ever there were an ideal day for invasion, this was it.

As the sun's first rays brought detail to the gray silhouettes of the invasion armada, Admiral Turner appeared briefly on the bridge of his flagship *Eldorado*. In a tattered old bathrobe, he rubbed sleep from his eyes, scanned the island dead ahead and its steel ring of 485 ships. Then he disappeared to launch the attack.

D-Day of any invasion begins early, slowly, and in seeming mass confusion. It gains overpowering momentum as intricate planning, training, and organization take hold. Then it explodes in a cacophony of thundering sound and destruction. The pattern was the same at Iwo Jima.

At 0630, Turner gave the irrevocable order: "Land the landing force!"

Now everything would be governed by an unforgiving timetable set months before at Pearl Harbor. Topside on transports, sailors opened hatches and swung out heavy booms to work cargoes. They lowered Higgins boats on

WHY IWO JIMA?

As with most bloody military operations, questions persist about the human cost of Iwo and its strategic worth in the downfall of Japan. But Iwo Jima in American hands meant that 24,751 Army Air Corps crewmen would be saved from ditching disabled aircraft in the icy waters of the north Pacific with an almost certain loss of most of them. By war's end, 2,251 emergency landings had been made on the island by B-29 Superfort bombers.

And Iwo Jima gave the United States a forward airbase at the front door of the Japanese homeland. The small jungle-covered island gave the Americans a bastion that cleared the way for saturation bombardment of the heart of the enemy's war-making capacity and made feasible the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the war.

With the capture of the Mariana Islands in June and July of 1944, the United States was beginning to crank out the historic scenario of the final grand phase of the war in the Pacific.

The hard-won victory in the Marianas had shattered the last line of major enemy island defenses guarding the approaches to Japan from the south, and had gained a land mass that could take the mammoth B-29 Superforts arriving daily from aircraft plants in the States to mount unsurpassed raids against the heart of Japan.

The bomb run to Japan from the Marianas was no milk run.

It was, at best, a dangerous and fatiguing roundtrip of 3,000 miles. At worst, it was hell in the skies that claimed awful losses—casualties so bad, in fact, that General Curtis E. LeMay, commander of the 20th Air Force, said they couldn't be sustained for long.

Iwo Jima was the major reason. There was no way to skirt the island—it was halfway to Japan from the Marianas and squarely athwart

their davits and slung nets over the side for Marines to climb down, loaded with heavy packs and weapons, to bobbing landing craft. Amphibious amtracs made giant circles and waited for signals to form assault waves and head for shore.

The last chance to clear the beaches with naval fire began at 0640. The thunder mounted in fury for 80 minutes, as thousands of tons of hot steel and explosives ripped into the island. All firing ceased temporarily at 0805. It was time for the carrier planes to add their pulverizing punch.

The naval bombardment roared anew when the skies cleared of planes at 0825, now 35 minutes until H-Hour. In that time, another 8,000 shells smothered the landing zones. It was now or never if the beaches were to be cleared of Japanese resistance. In five minutes, 68 amtracs would cross the Line of Departure and begin the 4,000-yard, half-hour run to shore.

Four regiments of Marines—the 23rd and 25th of the Fourth Division on the right, and the Fifth Division's 27th and 28th on the left—were the spearhead.

High tension rode with the men as they churned toward the seven landing beaches on the two miles of black sand stretching from Mount Suribachi north to the cliffs of a rock quarry. Across the ramp of one Higgins boat, in foot-high letters, were the words, "Too Late To Worry."

The Marines would hit the beaches within minutes now, but they would land on an island whose main defenses hardly had been dented, much less destroyed. It was a tragic fact that 72 consecutive days of high-level bombing by Army Air Corps planes, intermittent earlier strikes by Navy task forces, and the three days of all-out pre-invasion bombardment by Nimitz's biggest guns had barely diminished Japanese Lt. Gen. Tadamichi Kuribayashi's power to hit back.

Of 915 known major fortifications on Iwo, fewer than 200 had been silenced, and that number didn't include literally hundreds of smaller but deadly strongpoints that would claim thousands of Marine casualties.

At 0905, jammed radio rooms on every ship in the invasion armada heard the message: "Assault troops on the beach!" It was five minutes behind the schedule made months before and 6,000 miles away at Pearl Harbor.

Amtracs were still moving ahead as rear ramps slammed down and the first wave of men swarmed from them in a thin, surging line stretching along two miles of beach front. They hit it on a dead run, and first strides were easy as momentum carried them a few yards.

Then, suddenly, strides slowed to laborious shuffles as feet sank calf-deep into soft, sucking, black volcanic cinders. Each forward step left elephant-size footprints. And as men crossed the first narrow ribbon of beach and flung themselves against terraces leading up from the shoreline, the going was worse.

Any major ship-to-shore amphibious landing is the most complex and difficult of all military operations—it can become total chaos within minutes. Success or failure hinges on the first critical moments, and the attack can go either way, depending upon the training and discipline of the troops.

Now, on Iwo's strange and deadly shore, order began to emerge as Marine tradition, leadership and combat skills took command. Individuals started to form up in fire teams and squads, then in platoons and companies and battalions, as all became meshed into the expected fighting machine.

The wary Marines began to think that maybe, maybe, everything was going to be all right. They were ashore, and the landing, except for the torturous black sand, had been made with amazing speed and precision. Maybe, just maybe, most defenses were knocked out. After all, the Japanese were reacting with only small-arms fire, and it wasn't as heavy as they had expected.

General Kuribayashi, however, had planned it that way. The key to his battle scheme was to let the Marines land and suck them into a gigantic ambush. His troops, predictably, had been stunned and shell-shocked by the massive American firepower. But now they were at their posts, while the shrewd samurai bided his time.

Let the Marines land against light opposition. Make them lift naval gunfire and halt air support to avoid hitting their own troops. Give the Japanese time to shake off the effects of bombardment and air attacks. Let the beaches pile up with men and equipment. Then cut off further landings with smothering artillery and mortar fire. Halt the flow of reinforcements to pinned-down Marines. Let outfits ashore bleed to death with casualties. Then push the invaders off the island.

Kuribayashi triggered his trap shortly after ten o'clock.

Sand hummocks, appearing as giant dead anthills moments before, spewed machine-gun fire from apertures hardly visible above ground level. Mortars fell in waterfall-like cascades from hundreds of concealed pits. Heavy artillery and rapid-firing antiaircraft guns, barrels lowered to rake the beaches, slammed shells into oncoming landing craft and support vessels. Land mines, sown like oats in a field, exploded in sickening blasts on the terraces as Marines stumbled across them. Fifteen-inch coastal defense guns

Allied strategy in the Pacific was to seize only those island fortresses necessary to win the war.

the only direct flight path to targets. With Iwo Jima in Japanese hands, every mission was a cliffhanger. The island's primitive radar worked well enough to give Iwo-based Zeroes time to ambush Japan-bound B-29s with brutal losses. Fierce fighter attacks and deadly antiaircraft fire, triggered by word of impending raids flashed from Iwo, again would hit the Superforts with devastating results as they arrived over Japan.

Crippled American planes trying to return to the Marianas were easy prey for enemy pilots lurking in the skies around Iwo, while Japanese bombers from the same island made almost nightly harassing strikes on Saipan's airfields.

This would end with Iwo's capture. So, in early July, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington ordered that the island must be seized by mid-January 1945. Then, instead of being a potent bastion in Japanese hands, it would be a haven for shot-up Superforts and those short of fuel.

TOP: In Suribachi's ominous shadow, visiting Navy Secretary James V. Forrestal (left) watches the invasion's progress from the deck of the USS Eldorado *with one of the Pacific War's more controversial generals—Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith. ABOVE: Howitzer-armed amtrac landing craft are in the first wave of the invasion of Iwo Jima at 8:28 a.m. on Feb. 19, 1945, under heavy Japanese fire. "God knows our losses will be horrible regardless of what we do," General Smith had cautioned Admiral Spruance prior to the attack.*

and giant mortars rained down shells from Mount Suribachi's base, slopes and summit.

Suddenly, every square yard of the beachhead was under methodical, deadly fire. There was no main defense line for the Marines to breach; they stood athwart a giant sponge, and now 6,200 men were pinned down on a 3,000-yard strip of sand—more than two Marines to every three feet of shoreline. Boats were still trying to land. Troops wondered why. There was no space for more men to move, and there was no way to dig a foxhole. As fast as the loose volcanic ash was scooped out, the hole filled up again, as in a bin of wheat. Men burrowed as best they could into the sand or hugged the sides of shell craters—anything for a shield against the withering enemy fire. The beach behind turned into a nightmare of twisted hulks—landing craft, burning jeeps and trucks, bogged-down tanks and artillery.

But Kuribayashi's ambush had a fatal flaw. He had waited too long to spring it. He had given the Marines an irretrievable hour before launching his counterattack.

More than 6,000 troops were on a precarious but functioning beachhead. They had some artillery—not very much, but enough to let the Japanese know it was ashore. They had a few tanks, and bulldozers to cut lanes through the terraces to get the Shermans into firing position.

Two miles at sea on the *Eldorado*, General Smith and Admiral Turner monitored radio circuits that snapped with heavy static and cryptic messages from unit commanders over the sounds of battle. They'd shared the common bond of apprehension and concern before—especially during the bloody invasions of Tarawa and Peleliu—but never had the situation been more grave.

Ashore, men started to move. First it was one man lunging into the maelstrom of enemy fire, then fire teams and squads, then larger units. Some landing craft survived the mortars and artillery to put more tanks and cannon on the beach. Marines fell in mounting numbers, but others pushed inland from the shore, up the terraces, and over the top onto the runway of Motoyama Number One, the first of the island's three airstrips—the prime objectives of the operation. Still others rammed across the narrow neck of the island at Suribachi's base. They crept and crawled, dodged and ducked, slithered and staggered—but they moved ahead.

Sunset came at 6:45 p.m. Everyone, from admirals and generals afloat to teenaged privates ashore, believed there would be a screaming banzai charge sometime before dawn. Where, when and in what force the enemy would strike was anybody's guess. But the counterattack had come every time, everywhere, Marines had invaded before. There was no reason to believe it wouldn't come on Iwo.

Darkness came quickly—twilight was gone by seven o'clock. The Marines were dug in along the airstrip and in shell craters on the slopes and shoreline, waiting for whatever came. Most shivered in the chilly, 40-degree temperature. A lucky few were warm; digging had tapped seams of volcanic heat just below the surface.

Their front lines were nowhere near D-Day objectives; it would be nearly a week before those were reached. But the banzai, for the first time in the Pacific war, wasn't part of the Japanese scheme of defense—not with General Kuribayashi in command and with 30,000 Marines and thousands of tons of equipment and supplies jammed on the beachhead, and with every square foot of it within easy range of every big weapon in his arsenal.

Enemy mortars and artillery fell without letup into the lines—a few rounds here, a few rounds there, but always enough to cause more casualties and to make any sleep virtually impossible.

At dawn on D-Day plus one, out on the *Eldorado*, "Howlin' Mad" Smith took an early look at the battle reports and wondered why there had been no banzai. "I don't know who he is, but the Jap general running the show is one smart bastard," he said.

General Kuribayashi, from his concrete blockhouse headquarters in the high ground above the second airstrip, had informed Tokyo that Marines had landed and that he was slaughtering the invaders. With minor cost to Iwo's defenses, his men and guns had maimed or killed Marines in dreadful numbers during the first 18 hours of the battle. In all 2,312 Americans had fallen.

At the White House, President Roosevelt was told of the invasion and that the end wasn't in sight. He shuddered at the casualties. "It was the first time in the war, through good news and bad," author Jim Bishop later wrote, "that anyone saw the President gasp in horror."

General Kuribayashi knew from the first, when the Americans came, they would try to take Mount Suribachi—it was just simple military logic. The dormant volcano's 556-foot crest dominated the eight square miles of the island's barren rubble. It was an all-seeing eye to watch every movement of the invaders and direct pin-pointed bombardment on the Marines.

By D-Day he had made Suribachi as formidable as the Rock of Gibraltar. The wasteland at the foot of the volcano was studded with more than 70 camouflaged concrete blockhouses. Another 50 were concealed on its

As on Okinawa later, flamethrowing Sherman tanks proved of inestimable value in either rooting out or burning to death stubborn Japanese defenders on Iwo Jima—for example this tank in action at the base of Mount Suribachi as the crouching Marines at lower left watch its deadly stream of fire arching toward the enemy in March 1945.

rocky sides, and many of these were connected by tunnels with hundreds of caves, mortar and sniper pits and reinforced pillboxes.

Kuribayashi hoped its 2,000 dug-in troops would hold Suribachi for at least ten days in order to ravage the beaches with its own arsenal and to direct fire from his other fortications in the high ground at the northern half of the island.

When the Fifth Division's 28th Regiment went to work on Surbachi on D-Day plus one, its three assault battalions were across the 700-yard isthmus at the mountain's base. But the ground they held was less than 200 yards deep. It faced the enemy from two directions, and the Marines had to surround the fortress before they could move up the precipitous slopes to the summit (while simultaneously pushing northward toward the first airstrip). It took four bloody days to do the job.

Surribachi's conquest cost the 28th Regiment 510 men, killed or wounded, in four days. Since D-Day, the regiment's total casualties were 895, nearly 30 percent. And the battle for the island had just begun.

Years later an official Marine Corps monograph summed up the capture of the fortress. "The Japanese had conducted an effective defense," it said. "Making maximum use of their artillery, mortars, and automatic weapons, they did not waste themselves in costly all-out counterattacks. Forcing the Marines to come to them, the enemy inflicted heavy casualties before being blasted or burned out of their fortifications."

Three days later, Maj. Gen. Clifton B. Cates, dapper even in combat and chainsmoking Chesterfield cigarettes in an ebony holder, had shaved before dawn.

Now the commander of the Fourth Marine Division was on a raspy field phone to Lt. Col. Walter Weinsinger, whose 23rd Regiment would spearhead the day's attack to take the second airstrip. "See if you can find a weak spot in the bastard's front," Cates told his commander, "and keep slugging the sonuvabitch until you do!" Lieutenant Colonel Walter Jordan had the same orders for his 24th Regiment, but in slightly different words.

What the Marines now faced was an unknown number of Japanese strongly entrenched in a maze of terrain unbelievable even for Iwo Jima. It was a complex of fortifications the Marines quickly dubbed "the Meat Grinder."

It was a defensive masterpiece of concealment and construction. And it would be seven terrible days before it was silenced—a week until it stopped chewing up Marines who daily slammed into a quartet of natural strongpoints made almost inpregnable by the Japanese, who had dug connecting tunnels and reinforced every key position with concrete and steel.

Components of the man-devouring network were Hill 382; the rubble of what once was Minami Village; a bowl-shaped area called "the Amphitheater," and a craggy escarpment the Marines would remember as "Turkey Knob." Individually, each was formidable. Collectively, they were a killing ground.

At ground level, Hill 382 looked barren and harmless. But its sloping summit was a massive observation post, equipped with high-powered binoculars and primitive electronic artillery spotting gear. Deep within the bowels was a 30-by-40-foot communications center with concrete walls four feet thick and a steel-reinforced roof able to withstand heavy naval shelling and direct hits from 500-pound bombs.

Two hundred yards west of Turkey Knob the ground fell sharply away to form a tiered natural bowl resembling a stadium without seats—the Amphitheater. On its three terraces the Japanese had built blockhouses along the south side of the depression. These were linked by 700-yards of tunnels with walls lined with telephone and electric light cables. Antitank and machine guns covered all approaches to the area from the south.

Minami had been one of Iwo's five villages, all evacuated when Kuribayashi started his build-up. Now it, along with the others, was a rubble of debris. But the devastation of its half-dozen concrete buildings was a network of machine-gun positions, mortar pits, and sniper-infested spider traps, most with steel covers.

Hill 382 was the keystone of the Meat Grinder's awesome defense system. Before there was any hope of silencing the other objectives, it had to be taken. And as long as it was in enemy hands, it also was a crucial roadblock to the push up the center of the island by the Third Division.

TOP: While an American medium tank burns at left, having been stopped by accurate Japanese artillery fire, two Marine riflemen open fire on enemy troops from the cover of a roadside embankment during the assault on the town of Nishi in February 1945. MIDDLE: Marine mortar crewmen of the 27th Regiment hold their ears as their weapon lobs in rounds against emplaced Japanese infantry on Iwo Jima on Feb. 28, 1945, in one of the Pacific War's toughest amphibious invasions against Imperial Japan. ABOVE: Over 6,000 U.S. Marines would be killed on Iwo Jima, and many more wounded, such as this "gyrene" being helped to the rear for treatment and possible evacuation by two of his buddies in February 1945, while another Marine at bottom right talks by radiotelephone.

Iwo's original battle plan called for Maj. Gen. Graves B. Erksine's hard-driving outfit—veterans of the bitter Bougainville and Guam campaigns—to be the floating reserve. But it had been ordered into action when the Fourth and Fifth Division attacks showed signs of running out of steam because of their heavy casualties.

Shortly after eight o'clock on D-Day plus six, the Fourth Division went to work on Hill 382. Spearheading the assault was Major James S. Scales' Third Battalion of the 23rd Regiment. The attack was preceded by the customary naval shelling, air strikes, and artillery. And when Scales' outfit jumped off, it was hit with the customary violent reaction of the Japanese.

From beginning to end, the day was one of futility and heavy losses. Six tanks clanked forward in advance of the infantry, and four were immediately knocked out by land mines and hidden antitank guns. The two survivors made little headway; they simply roared and churned as treads dug deep tracks in the volcanic ash.

Machine guns, rifle fire, hand grenades, and mortars ripped into the troops. Bringing up flamethrowers and demolitions men was impossible. By midafternoon, it was obvious that the attack was going nowhere, and at four o'clock it was called off.

The first day in the Meat Grinder had claimed nearly 500 Marines, a sickening cost to pay for a gain of less than a hundred yards. Five days later, Hill 382 was still firmly in Japanese hands. "Find a weak spot in the bastard's front," General Cates had ordered. There was no weak spot. "And keep slugging the sonuvabitch until you do!" Slug was all the Marines could do.

No one knows just when the Fourth Division's battle in the Meat Grinder finally gained the necessary momentum. It was sometime between dawn and dusk on D-plus 13, the eighth day of atrocious blood-letting. But with Hill 382 then firmly in Marine hands, patrols pushed cautiously ahead. Henceforth, it would be just a matter of exploiting the tear in General Kuribayashi's main defense line; of taking out bypassed positions and demolishing what remained of strongpoints atop Turkey Knob and among the rubble of the Amphitheater and Minami Village. Marine losses in the Meat Grinder were grim evidence that there was no weak spot in the Japanese defenses of Iwo Jima: 2,800 Fourth Division men had been killed or wounded in trying to find out.

On March 17, D-plus 26, Admiral Nimitz issued a special communique, the last of the campaign, announcing that Iwo Jima had been "officially secured" at six o'clock that evening. General Keller Rockey's Fifth Division troops had driven almost to Kitano Point at the northwestern tip of the island. General Erskine's Third Division had slashed through the center to the northern shoreline and captured the two remaining airstrips. Cates' Fourth Division had taken the Meat Grinder and opened the door to final victory along the eastern front.

"Among the Americans who served on Iwo island," Admiral Nimitz rightly said, "uncommon valor was a common virtue."

The announcement lauded all branches of the armed forces for their roles in the terrible fighting, particularly the Marines. He reported that 24,127 had fallen: 4,189 killed in combat and 19,938 wounded during 26 days and nine hours of combat.

To the Marines at the front, however, especially those hacking away against stubborn resistance in the devilish sandstone buttes of what they called "Cushman's Pocket" at the island's northeastern tip, it appeared the Admiral had been too hasty in writing off Kuribayashi and what remained of his troops. The final phase of the campaign, in

Mount Suribachi looked awesome to the U.S. Marines as they stormed ashore on bloody Iwo Jima. Although the mountaintop actually occupied only a small portion of the island's overall land mass, the Americans waged a tough fight to take it from the stubborn Japanese defenders who were well-emplaced on its rocky slopes.

fact, would last another ten days and claim another 1,724 American casualties before the guns of the Japanese would finally fall silent.

"Howling Mad" Smith left Iwo the day it was declared secure. The general left in style. Admiral Nimitz had sent his personal plane, a four-engined Douglas transport, to carry the Old Warrior back to Pearl Harbor.

In a press conference held at Pacific Fleet Headquarters, Smith said: "We showed the Japanese at Iwo Jima that we can take any damn thing they've got." Smith addressed a standing-room-only audience of rear-echelon newsmen. "Watching the Marines cross the island reminded me of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. Mortars, artillery fire and rockets fell among the troops. But they closed. I say again, this was the toughest fight we have had so far."

Formations of B-29 bombers filled the skies over Iwo that very night—307 Superforts in a 60-mile-long armada heading for a massive fire-bomb attack on Kobe. They left Japan's sixth largest city an inferno.

And Iwo Jima, because it was there and in American hands, saved the lives of 146 fliers. Thirteen bombers, crippled by antiaircraft fire over the target, landed on the island. On Saipan later, General Curtis LeMay briefed newsmen. "Iwo Jima is really making the job easier," he said. The 20th Air Force's commander spoke with first-hand knowledge. He had piloted the pathfinder bomber on the mission. But that was not yet the end of the Iwo Jima story.

In the predawn stillness of March 26, exactly five weeks after D-Day, between 200 and 300 Japanese mounted a last suicide attack. It wasn't a drunken, shouting banzai charge, but a well-organized and silent raid.

The first indication of trouble came at 0515 when a sudden, sharp outburst of small-arms fire broke out in a bivouac area just west of the second airfield. Peacefully at sleep in a complex of tents were nearly 300 men—a mixed bag of Marine shore parties and supply troops, Air Corps ground crews, Army antiaircraft gunners and Navy Seabees. All had bedded down believing there was no danger within miles.

Moving grimly and silently, the enemy struck from three directions. Within seconds Japanese were everywhere, slashing tent walls, knifing sleeping men who never knew what hit them, hurling hand grenades, swinging ceremonial swords, firing pistols and automatic weapons.

By a stroke of fortune, the brunt of the attack hit the Fifth Pioneer Battalion. The Pioneers had finished their shore-party work and were ready to leave the island that day. Like all Marines, they were trained as combat troops first, specialists second, and they knew what to do in such a melee as this.

First Lieutenant Harry L. Martin threw up a scrimmage line manned largely by black troops. They cooly beat back one attack, then another, by the now-screaming Japanese. It soon was light enough to see what was happening, and Martin moved to help other Marines in a foxhole and was wounded twice. Then the 34-year-old reserve officer overran a machine-gun position, killing four Japanese.

Fifth Division infantrymen, standing by to head for the beach and board ship, heard the fury and joined the blazing firefight. They provided the muscle and combat savvy to finally beat back the raiders in more of the furious man-to-man action that had marked the struggle for Iwo Jima from the beginning.

In the blood-spattered tents were 44 dead Air Corps men and 88 wounded. Forty Marines were casualties; nine killed and 31 wounded, the last of 25,851 to fall in the 36 days of Iwo's blood bath. Strewn grotesquely about the battleground were 262 Japanese bodies. Eighteen of the enemy were taken prisoner, the last of fewer than 200 captured since D-Day.

No one knows the name of the first Marine killed on the awful island. But the name of the last was Lieutenant Harry Martin. And he earned the last Medal of Honor (27 in all) to go to the valient men of Iwo Jima. □

Bill D. Ross, a veteran of the Iwo Jima assault as a Marine Corps combat correspondent, recently published his book Iwo Jima: Legacy of Valor, *which quickly earned the Award of Merit from the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association. For a larger view of the Pacific War explaining Iwo Jima's role in overall U.S. strategy, Ronald Spector's* Eagle Against the Sun *is another recently published book recommended as further reading.*

Final Hours For Berlin

As the Red Army rolled in from the east, the German High Command created paper armies to stop the juggernaut. In his bunker, Hitler still raged to the end.

By Bruce R. Pirnie

A devout man and a master of defensive tactics, German Colonel General Gotthard Heinrici would need all his strength and every bit of his ability for the task suddenly thrust upon him in late March of 1945. In the last days of the Third Reich, his would be the unenviable task of defending Berlin against the juggernaut roaring in from the east, the Red Army.

To the west, American General Dwight D. Eisenhower's Allied war machine was advancing again after the Battle of the Bulge. With that last-gasp German counteroffensive turned aside by mid-January, the Allies, in a triple offensive, rolled forward to the Rhine River. At Remagen on March 7, they were amazed to find an undemolished bridge that would enable them to pour across Germany's last western barrier. Eisenhower's next move, however, would not be a continued drive into Germany's heartland. He instead laid plans for the envelopment of 300,000 German troops gathered to defend the industrial Ruhr.

To the east, spurred by Stalin's admonition to march into Berlin before the Americans could reach the symbolic German capital, the Soviet juggernaut of 180 divisions had been rolling forward since January 12. By February 4, advance elements of the Red Army had reached the Oder River, not 50 miles from Berlin. The Soviets outnumbered the German forces in front of them by a ratio of six to one in tanks and personnel.

Worse, from the German perspective, there was little in the way of an armored reserve to throw into the breach—a majority of Germany's tanks had been committed to the Battle of the Bulge, and those armored units that hadn't been completely chewed up to the west were only now filtering back from the Ardennes. Still, Hitler's Army Chief of Staff Heinz Guderian was doing his best to pull together a new group for the battle in the east.

Hitler shocked and enraged Guderian by naming his SS chieftain Heinrich Himmler as commander of the new

"Vistula" army group, then acceded to Guderian's demand to assign Himmler an experienced officer as chief of staff. Thus, General Walther Wenck was in place to help develop Guderian's planned counterattack at the Oder. Six panzer divisions were to lead the blow against the northern flank of the Soviet salient on February 15. Two days later, however, Wenck was injured in an auto accident, and he was replaced by Hans Krebs.

The fighting to the east reached a pause as the Soviets gathered themselves for their last push—the drive into Berlin. The German attack on the salient hadn't driven them back appreciably, and in Berlin Guderian made use of the pause to cajole and argue with Himmler and Hitler, until, finally, the *Führer* agreed on March 20 to the appointment of a new commander for Army Group Vistula, the defensive strategist Gotthard Heinrici.

Heinrici, an infantry and panzer veteran of the fighting in Russia, wasn't given much time to reflect upon the impossible task before him. The Russians had established

The Red Army officer at left prepares to give the signal to fire to two heavy mortar gun crews during the last European land battle of World War II—the Soviet siege of Berlin in the spring of 1945. INSET: Russian T-34 medium tanks rumble past the Reich capital's renowned symbol of military victory in earlier wars, the Brandenburger Tor *(Brandenburg Gate.)*

a bridgehead at Küstrin on the Oder, and Hitler already had ordered the 9th Army under General Theodor Busse to push them back. Henrici was to supervise, but events were moving fast, and it already was too late. The Red Army forces developing the bridgehead were so powerful, they trapped a panzer division there. The planned counteroffensive now became an effort to relieve the trapped German division.

Eight days after Heinrici's appointment, meanwhile, he discovered his mentor at headquarters, Guderian, had had a final row with Hitler and was gone. Hans Kreb had been vaulted to Army Chief of Staff in Guderian's place. In the next few days, while up and down the Eastern Front the Russians built their strength for the final drive, Heinrici continued to do what he could. One of his defensive specialties was the "empty air" tactic—anticipating the enemy's intentions, he would withdraw his forward troops before an opening artillery barrage.

Heinrici explained his Oder River tactics soon after the war. "When the Russians were found to be concentrating for an attack," he said, "I withdrew my troops from the first line under cover of night to the second line—usually about 2 kilometers behind. The result was that the Russian blow hit the air, and its further attack did not have the same impetus."

To anticipate Soviet intentions, Heinrici relied on patrols picking up prisoners—but he also has been credited with an uncanny knack for foretelling enemy moves. His second line, meanwhile, would be the new line of defense in the sector under direct assault, while in nearby sectors his men would reoccupy their original first lines. "This system worked very well in the battle of the Oder," he said. "The only drawback was our scanty strength, after so much had been wasted needlessly by the rigid defense of positions impossible to hold."

Master that he was, Heinrici had only thinly stretched forces to offer as a defense for Berlin, and across the Oder, as March gave way to April, the storm was only gathering.

Adolf Hitler shot himself, while his wife took poison, in the room at right, and aides carried their bodies into the Chancellery garden. Here, they were burned in a shallow ditch.

Heinrici hadn't the strength to stop it. The real responsibility lay with the small group hidden away in an underground bunker in Berlin. But there, in a mole-like environment, the perceptions of the world beyond the bunker walls were totally unreal, even surreal.

Outside, the beautiful April flowers were blooming, but inside the bunker, life was dispiritingly drab. Almost the only good news was President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death on April 12. Hitler and his propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels seized on this news as though it were their salvation. It was, of course, ridiculous to expect a change in American policy, especially since Vice President Harry S. Truman was known to be an implacable enemy of Nazism, but the Nazi hierachy was hungry for miracles. Hitler's stupendous arrogance and his abysmal ignorance of the world outside Germany had led to a situation where a miracle was required. Before Hitler's eyes was the overwrought historical example of Frederick the Great, who had survived repeated disasters in the Seven Years War only to be saved when Czarina Elizabeth died and Russian policy changed abruptly. Hitler kept a portrait of Frederick on his wall and often referred to the legend of sudden, fortuitous salvation.

On April 13, the Soviets captured Vienna. Any day, they might begin another large offensive in Central Germany that could cut the country in half. On April 15 Hitler decreed the command relationships in the likely event the Allied armies were to link up in Germany. If Hitler were south of this line, his Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz would command in the north. If Hitler were to the north, then *Luftwaffe* Field Marshal Albert Kesselring would command in the south. Thus, in mid-April, Hitler still had not decided to remain in Berlin. His appointments also suggest the depth of his suspicion and contempt for his Army officers. In a war that was now dominated by land operations, neither commander was from the Army.

On the same day, Hitler issued the last of his important proclamations in the familiar blend of bombast, pathos and mendacity. It was addressed to "Soldiers of the German Eastern Front" and began with a reference to the "Jewish-Bolshevik arch enemy" that intended to kill old men and children, turn the women into "barracks whores," and march everyone else to Siberia. Hitler reassured his listeners by saying that massive German artillery was ready to receive the attack. After the usual appeals for fanatic resistance, Hitler added that fate had just removed "the greatest war criminal of all time," meaning Roosevelt, and said the war was approaching a decisive turn. In this at least he was correct. The following day Soviet Marshals George K. Zhukov and Ivan S. Konev began their final great offensive.

As the last vestiges of the Nazi empire came crashing down, defensive genius Heinrici would be victimized by his own, rather than by the enemy. First, though, his Army Group Vistula had to contend with the raging storm unleashed by Soviet Marshals Zhukov and Konev on April 16. Zhukov alone began his offensive on the banks of the Oder with an opening barrage by 20,000 guns. Entire German villages simply disintegrated. To the south, Konev's First Ukrainian Army Group joined in with its own artillery barrage and assault across the Neisse River. Although Eisenhower would halt his armies at the Elbe River to the west rather than race the Russians to Berlin, each of the Soviet Marshals wanted the honor of reaching Berlin first.

Konev would win that race, because Zhukov was held up by German General Busse's stubborn defense mounted from the Seelöwe Heights just past the western banks of the Oder. The 9th Army units held out for 48 hours while Konev circled upward from the south. Once clear of the Seelöwe obstacle, Zhukov now raced for Berlin also. Hein-

AT WAR'S END A TOTAL RECLUSE

"Now he was shriveling up like an old man. His limbs trembled; he walked stooped with dragging footsteps. Even his voice became quavering and lost its old masterfulness. Its force had given way to a faltering, tonelesss way of speaking. When he became excited, as he frequently did in a senile way, his voice would start breaking."

In this way, Albert Speer describes Hitler during the last days of his life. To Armaments Minister Speer, it seemed that Hitler had decayed so far that his suicide came as an anticlimax. Certainly the contrast could hardly have been stronger. The man who had strutted and preened as the personification of power was reduced to a feeble relic. The man who had been idolized by millions was creeping into the last corner to die.

Ever since the war began, Hitler had removed himself progressively from public view until he became a recluse seen only by his military staffs. Hitler the politician had become Hitler the military genius, much to the detriment of the German war effort. From June 1941, when the Russian campaign began, until November 1944, Hitler had stayed primarily at the *Wolfschanze* (Wolf's Lair) near Rastenburg in East Russia, now Ketrzyn in Poland. This was a graceless, cheerless field headquarters set in a landscape of lakes, swamps and thick forest. It was surrounded by minefields, fences, and sentries, much like a concentration camp.

Here Hitler filled his days with interminable rounds of briefings and conferences, delving ever deeper into the command of the German Army until it lost all scope for initiative. Here, his dangerous enemies, the aristocratic officers of the Ger-

rici had no choice but to order his 3rd Army back from the Oder Line, and for that "retreat" Heinrici was sacked—someone else would be given the thankless job of defending Berlin in its death throes.

On April 20, Hitler marked his 56th birthday. In prewar days, his birthday had been a national celebration, analogous to the Emperor's birthday during the Hohenzollerns' reign. National-Socialists had spoken fatuously of clear skies as "Hitler Weather," supposedly characteristic of his birthday. Now, of course, Germans hoped for clouds to curtail the Allied bombing attacks. On his last birthday, Hitler ventured out of his bunker into the denuded Reich Chancellery to receive visitors. In this shabby setting, he met the most prominent National Socialists together for the last time: Göring, Goebbels, Bormann, Himmler, Ribbentrop, Speer, Jodl, Keitel, and Dönitz were all present. Hitler also greeted a delegation of Hitler Youth in the Chancellery garden. He spoke in a low voice and patted a few of them.

The military situation on Hitler's last birthday was no longer just hopeless for the Germans. It was catastrophic, the end clearly in sight. By 21 April, three of Zhukov's armies would be in the suburbs of Berlin and by 25 April he and Konev would surround the city. To the west, American forces were accepting the surrender of some 317,000 Germans in the Ruhr pocket. On 21 April, the German commander of the Ruhr pocket, Field Marshal Walter Model, walked into the forest and shot himself. Farther south, General George S. Patton's 3rd Army had advanced almost at will. According to a joke current among the Germans, their forces erected "61-minute" road blocks: the Americans laughed at each roadblock for 60 minutes, then took one minute to tear it down. By coincidence, American troops secured Nuremberg just as Hitler was celebrating his birthday. Defended to the last by its flak batteries, this former showplace of great Nazi rallies was reduced to piles of rubble.

In the bunker on April 20, there had been some talk of moving to the Alps, where Hitler usually visited in the spring. Quite naturally, the guests were anxious that Hitler make this decision before the Soviets closed the last road into Bavaria, but Hitler dashed all their hopes by choosing to stay in Berlin, at least for the time being. He was, however, simply procrastinating, putting off an unpleasant decision as long as possible.

At this point, Armaments Minister Albert Speer noticed an astonishing change in Hermann Goring. The *Reichsmarschall*, equivalent to a six-star general if there had been any, usually appeared in some extravagent, gaudy uniform of his own creation. Today, he wore a spartan, olive-drab outfit with simple shoulder straps, giving him the appearance of an overweight American general. Göring explained to Hitler that some inexplicably urgent tasks required his presence in southern Germany. If Hitler saw through this rather transparent artifice, he gave no indication. The two men shook hands and parted for the last time in their lives.

The day after Hitler's birthday, Soviet artillery shells landed in the center of Berlin. Hitler immediately called the Chief of Staff of the *Luftwaffe* to inform him that the Soviets were shelling Berlin with a large-caliber railway gun. Apparently, he wanted to believe that the Soviets were still as far from Berlin as the Germans had been from Paris in 1918. The Chief of Staff had to promise air attacks on the railway gun although he was quite sure that none existed. In fact, the Soviets now had Berlin in range of their larger field pieces.

On April 22, the Soviet artillery fire and discouraging news from the front seem to have momentarily broken Hitler's nerve. He admitted openly for the first time that the war was lost, an assessment that hardly was news to his nervous entourage. Hitler said he was not physically strong enough to fight and he could not take the chance of being captured. He was not, in any case, the right man to negotiate with the Allies; Göring would be more suitable.

Hitler, however, failed to acknowledge reality very long. That same day he recovered his nerve long enough to issue a set of completely unrealistic operational orders. The recovering auto victim General Wenck was to disengage his reactivated 12th Army from the Western Front and attack eastwards towards Berlin until he established contact with Busse's 9th Army, which was encircled south of the city. Like so many operational orders given during the later years of the war, this one made sense only on Hitler's situation map, and presumably, like so many others, in the *Führer*'s mind. In these last days of the war, the High Command ceased to argue with Hitler and merely placated him by pretending to carry out impossible orders. Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, head of the High Command, was ideal for this job since he had never shown the least spark of independent thought from the beginning.

On April 23, Speer flew back to Berlin, compulsively unable to break with Hitler without some last farewell, even though Speer had spent the last months frustrating Hitler's orders to destroy Germany's industrial resources. Rather than a fond farewell, Speer was to view a bitter end. By this time, Soviet artillery fire was rearranging the rubble left from the American bombing raids. As Speer descended into the bunker, he met Martin Bormann, Secre-

man Army, narrowly failed to kill him in July 1944. After leaving the *Wolfschanze*, Hitler went to the Reich Chancellery in Berlin. He used several field headquarters on the Western front and finally returned to Berlin on 15 January 1945. He was never to leave the city again.

At first, Hitler made his home in the Old Reich Chancellery on *Wilhelmstrasse*, but Allied bombing attacks soon drove him underground. In mid-February, he began to live in a bunker built partially under the Chancellery and partially under its garden. This bunker had been constructed in 1942 and 1943 specifically to provide air raid protection. Its reinforced concrete roof was eight meters thick, as protection against the heaviest bombs. Typically, Hitler worried that a wall might crack, deluging him with ground water. Until mid-March, Hitler continued to hold conferences in the mammoth New Reich Chancellery with its fabled long hall. It was still largely intact, although furnishings, tapestries and paintings were in storage to protect them from the bombings, but the continual air raids and air-raid alerts finally proved too great a nuisance. After March, Hitler lived and worked almost exclusively in his bunker. The game by now had gone to ground.

Never intended for permanent occupancy, Hitler's quarters were cramped and squalid.

In addition to his fear of ground water, Hitler was apprehensive of poison gas, and in this case his fear was better-founded. In fact, no one less than Albert Speer was secretly planning to introduce gas into the ventilators in order to stop Hitler from systematically destroying the German economy. But Speer found himself foiled by elaborate concrete chimneys designed to exclude heavier-than-air gas, and an elaborate system of guard posts.

tary to the *Führer*,in an unusually polite mood. Bormann humbly asked Speer to convince Hitler to fly immediately to Berchtesgaden to take command in southern Germany. But when he saw Hitler, Speer spontaneously (and perhaps spitefully) recommended staying in Berlin. Hitler agreed and added that Eva Braun and his dog Blondi would die with him. Hitler said he would find suicide an easy end to a painful existence. Speer found this statement very believable. Indeed, he was beginning to have the weird feeling that Hilter was already slipping away from the living, that he might already be dead inside.

Speer stayed for Hitler's situation report and found it much altered. Only a few days earlier, the room had been crowded with high-ranking officers. Now only the acting Army Chief of Staff, General Hans Krebs, and a few liaison officers were present. The situation map showed only the Berlin-Potsdam area and there were no field reports, only scraps of news and conjecture. Speer was astonished to see Hitler display optimism about the outcome of the fighting. Up to this time, Speer had assumed that Hitler was obsessively optimistic. Now he began to wonder whether Hitler had not consciously tried to deceive everyone, perhaps long after he himself had actually realized the war was lost.

Shortly after the conference, there was a flurry of excitement over telegrams from Göring, now in the comparative safety of southern Bavaria. The first telegram was quite carefully worded. It was addressed to Hitler and inquired as to whether Hitler wished his deputy the *Reichsmarschall* to assume full freedom of action. Bormann considered the telegram evidence that Göring was embarked on a *coup d'etat*. Hitler seemed indifferent, until he learned of a message from Göring to Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop to join him immediately, unless he received contradictory instructions by midnight. This second telegram aroused Hitler into a wild fury. He immediately stripped Göring of the right of succession, which Göring had held since June 1941.

As Hitler ranted about Göring's alleged treason, he made some astonishing admissions. He said that Göring was lazy and corrupt, that he had ruined the *Luftwaffe* and that he was a longtime drug addict. Of course, these facts were common knowledge among Nazi insiders, but it was astonishing that Hitler also knew, that he had long known and done nothing. Then suddenly Hitler's tirade was over—he became apathetic again. If the war were lost anyway, said Hitler, it didn't really matter who concluded the peace.

By bringing the von Ribbentrop telegram so forcefully to Hitler's attention, meanwhile, Bormann had neatly deposed a rival and magnified his own importance. It may also be, however, that Bormann was secretly hoping Hitler might yet decide to leave Berlin, perhaps fly to Berchtesgaden, to thwart Göring's alleged coup. If so, the tactic failed, for Hitler gave no indication of wanting to leave.

Early the next morning, Hitler awoke and received Speer, who wanted to say farewell. The armaments minister was still in an emotional turmoil, torn by contradictory feelings of abhorrance and loyalty. But Hitler showed no trace of feeling as he offered his hand. "So, you're leaving? Fine. Good boy."

A few minutes later, Speer walked through the ruins of the New Reich Chancellery, architecturally his own creation. He was driven to the avenue between the Brandenburg Gate and the Victory Column, now lined by red lanterns for use as a runway. From his departing plane, he saw fires burning around Berlin and the tiny flashes of artillery fire looking like fireflies.

To succeed Göring as commander-in-chief of the *Luftwaffe*, Hitler had appointed Col. Gen. Ritter von Greim. Accompanied by the famous aviatrix Hanna Reitsch, Greim flew into Berlin's Gatow Airport and then into the center of the city, as Speer had done, arriving at the bunker on the evening of April 26. Greim was wounded in the right foot, the result of ground fire during his approach. Hitler received von Greim in a mood of self-pity. Describing Göring's telegram as an "ultimatum," Hitler said there was no more loyalty or honor, that he had been subjected to every bitterness and treachery. In conclusion, he named von Greim the new commander-in-chief of the *Luftwaffe* and promoted him to Field Marshal. This was the 27th time Hitler had raised an officer to five-star rank, an amazing number even considering the length of the war.

Hitler now gave von Greim such an optimistic report on the war situation that von Greim, who should have known better, felt much encouraged. It would seem that Hitler had still not entirely lost his almost magical powers of persuasion. Towards Hanna Reitsch, however, he showed himself to be more realistic. He gave her two poisoned capsules and revealed that he and Eva Braun intended to commit suicide. Their bodies would be burned. Returning to a more familiar note at the end, he added there was still hope that General Wenck's forces could relieve the Berlin garrison. Wenck's reactivated 12th Army, of course, was a paper tiger at best.

On 27 April, Hitler asked to see the liason officer to Himmler's SS, Grüppenführer (Maj. Gen.) Hermann Fegelein, who also happened to be Eva Braun's brother-in-law. No one seemed to know where Fegelein had gone. Eventually, a search party found him, wearing civilian clothes, in his Charlottenburg apartment. It would seem that Fegelein had decided the war was over and failed to realize how seriously Hitler still took things. Hitler ordered by telephone that Fegelein be arrested and held in a Gestapo bunker. By evening, the Reich Chancellery lay under almost continuous artillery fire.

On the afternoon of the following day, a British radio broadcast brought news of Heinrich Himmler's contacts with Count Folke Bernadotte of the Red Cross in Luebeck. Himmler was reported to have claimed that Hitler was ill or already dead and to have offered surrender to the Western Allies. Hitler seems to have immediately believed the worst of the SS leader. According to Hanna Reitsch, he become purple in the face and almost unrecognizable. He fell into a frenzy and declared Himmler's the greatest treason in history. Himmler was, of course, safely out of Hitler's reach, but the unfortunate Fegelein was not. Hitler ordered a summary court to try Felgelein on charges of complicity in Himmler's treason. Immediately following the guilty verdict, Fegelein was taken out and shot. Hitler sent von Greim and Hanna Reitsch away, with the impossible missions of leading the *Luftwaffe* in the fight for Berlin and taking Himmler prisoner. Against all odds, Hanna actually succeeded in flying von Greim out of the city. The distant Himmler, in the meantime, had adopted a disguise as a sergeant major in the military police arm of the Gestapo. He was too dimwitted to realize that such a uniform would subject him to instant Allied arrest. Himmler indeed was picked up the next day by the British and committed suicide by swallowing poison he carried in a vial.

Also on April 28, with his own suicide only days or even hours away, Hitler decided to marry Eva Braun. They had been a kind of unofficial married couple, with Eva at Hitler's left when he ate in private. Their relationship was kept a rigorous secret from the public, with the result that most Germans were greatly astonished when the marriage

The Red star is triumphant as a Soviet infantryman affixes the hammer-and-sickle banner atop a cupola of the Reichstag *Building while Russian vehicles stand in the street below. Later, the Soviets would make much propaganda out of the fact that they—and not the Western Allies—had taken Adolf Hitler's capital.*

became known. Eva apparently came to Berlin in the expectation of suicide as the fitting conclusion to their relationship. She was rewarded for her loyalty by going as his wife rather than his mistress.

They were married a little after 1 a.m. on April 29 in the bunker by a city official named Walter Wagner, with Goebbels and Bormann as official witnesses.

The ceremony took place in the situation room near Hitler's quarters. Afterwards the guests met the happy couple in the long corridor of the bunker. Following this meeting, Goebbels and his wife, Bormann, General Krebs and a few other officers joined the Hitlers in a small reception with champagne. As a strict teetotaller, Hitler stayed with tea. The conversation naturally turned to happier times, in particular to the Goebbels' wedding, for which Hitler had been a witness. After a few minutes, Hitler retired to write the document he chose to call "My Political Testament."

Hitler's testament opened on a shrill whine of self-pity before coming to the point. It was untrue, he said, that any German wanted war in 1939. The war was caused by statesmen who were either of Jewish origin or worked for Jewish interests. In what might have been an obscure reference to the Holocaust, he said that he left no doubt that there would be retribution against "those actually responsible" for the horrors of the war. From the sacrifice of his soldiers, he added, a new birth of National Socialism would follow. Hitler had the gall to declare that all military leaders should strengthen resistance by pointing out that the founder of the movement preferred death to capitulation.

In the second part of his political testament, Hitler took the extraordinary step of naming an entirely new government. He had, of course, no legal basis for the action, nor could even he have imagined that the new government would ever function. To continue the war "with all means," he named Admiral Dönitz as Reich President, Goebbels as Chancellor and Bormann as something called *Parteiminister*, an office that appeared here for the first time. Hitler went on to fill out a complete cabinet, omitting Speer, who had defied the order to destroy the German economy.

The testament closed with Hitler's central, idea, the thought that had dominated his intellectual life since his youth in Vienna: "Above all, I pledge the leadership of the nation and the followers to precise obedience to the racial laws and merciless resistance against the universal poisoner of all peoples, the international Jewry."

To this remarkable document, Hitler added another entitled "My Private Testament." It was written in the characteristic Hitlerian style, awkward, banal, rather lifeless on the printed page. He was, after all, a first-rate orator but only a third-rate author. He announced that Eva had come willingly to Berlin to die with him. "My most loyal Party comrade Martin Bormann" was to be executor of the will. The document concluded with another explanation of his decision to commit suicide: "I myself and my wife chose death in order to avoid the shame of flight or surrender. We wish to be burned immediately on the spot where I accomplished the greatest part of my daily work during twelve years of duty for my people."

On the afternoon of April 29 Hitler began with the business of suicide. The first to go was his faithful dog Blondi, poisoned by a medical officer on Hitler's order. About the same time, Hitler made presents of poisoned capsules to his secretaries as farewell presents. During the afternoon came the news that Mussolini and his mistress had been condemned to death and executed.

Late in the evening, Hitler sent a last radio message to his Operations Chief, General Alfred Jodl, outside the encircled city. His first question: where is the spearhead of Wenck's 12th Army, which was supposed to relieve Berlin? Just after midnight in the morning of 30 April, Field Marshal Keitel replied that Wenck was far from Berlin and

TOP: As at Stalingrad earlier, there was house-to-house fighting in Berlin, but the defenders were Germans, not Russians, in a reversal of history. This photo, taken on the night of April 30th, shows the city on fire. MIDDLE: A Russian officer walks through the doorway of the Führer's shattered Bunker in the Reich Chancellery garden after the fall of the city. Through this door, Hitler's corpse was carried out and placed in a shallow ditch in the right foreground, where it was doused with gasoline and set afire. ABOVE: Two Soviet soldiers point to the fallen symbol of Nazi Germany's greatnes on May 2, 1945.

could not continue the attack. This answer left no doubt as to the complete hopelessness of the situation.

Hitler's inquiry about General Wenck's 12th Army merely showed that the Führer was living in a fantasy land. Wenck had held the east bank of the Elbe only because the Americans stopped at the river to wait for the Soviets. On Hitler's orders, Wenck had begun an attack eastwards towards Berlin on April 26. At the outset, 12th Army was successful because the Soviets were concentrating on the battle for Berlin. But when Wenck encountered strong Soviet resistance about eight miles south of Potsdam, his attack came to a complete halt. Even if Wenck could have reached Berlin, his forces were too weak to help. Ironically, Wenck had suggested on April 29 that the Berlin garrison break out and join him, an idea that made more sense than Hitler's fantasy that Wenck could relieve Berlin. Eventually, some 30,000 survivors from Busse's 9th Army to the east did, in fact, reach Wenck and thus enjoy the happy fate of American captivity. Wenck himself served dutifully down to the last moment. On May 1, he would cross the Elbe in a rubber raft in the nick of time to surrender to the Americans, who still waited quietly on the western bank.

A few hours after the radio message from Keitel, Hitler accompanied by Bormann, appeared to take his farewell. He mumbled a few words and shook the secretaries' hands. This farewell scene caused an abrupt change of mood in the bunker complex. Most of its inhabitants, apart from Goebbels, had no interest in suicide, and all had wondered how Hitler would comport himself at the end and what demands he would make of them. It was an immense relief to know that he was going quietly and they would be left to their own devices. Some began to smoke openly, an activity Hitler had always forbidden, while others began drinking. In one part of the bunker complex, dancing began, and at times the noise became so great that those in Hitler's bunker section had to ask for quiet.

While people were almost literally dancing over his grave, Hitler still hesitated to kill himself. While he hesitated, Hitler made various people responsible for burning his corpse, including both Goebbels and Bormann. He also ordered his personal pilot to assist Bormann in reaching Admiral Dönitz with important instructions. Around midday, Hitler took part in a last situation conference. There was very little to report other than the fact that the Soviets had reached the Potsdamer Platz in the center of Berlin. It was clear that if Hitler hesitated much longer, the Soviets would be at the door of his bunker.

At about three in the afternoon of April 30, Hitler went to say another farewell in the corridor of the bunker. He and Eva appeared arm-in-arm to say goodbye to Goebbels, Krebs, and others. Then the two withdrew into the conference room. The door closed behind them and those outside waited. There was a brief anticlimax as Magda Goebbels ran up and insisted on seeing Hitler. Unable to dissuade her, Colonel Otto Guensche knocked on Hitler's door and asked if Hitler would see her. Obviously annoyed, Hitler said he would not. Guensche closed the door again, and a few minutes later there was a single shot fired. Bormann entered first, followed by Hitler's valet. Hitler and his bride were lying on the sofa. Hitler was covered with blood and had obviously shot himself either in the temple or through the mouth. An unused pistol was lying in Eva's lap. Her eyes were wide open and there was a strong scent of cyanide. Before her death, she had removed her shoes and placed them neatly at one end of the couch.

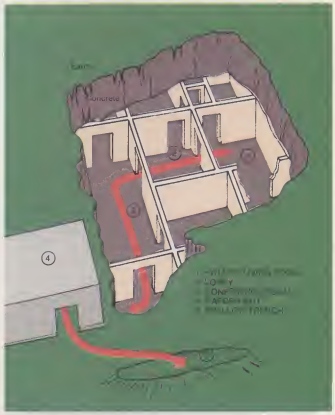
The commander of the SS guard had the bodies carried out of the bunker and placed near the entrance. Hitler's

chauffeur found gasoline to pour over the bodies. Due to the wind and the danger of occasional Soviet shellbursts, the valet had difficulty striking a match. He retreated into the bunker entrance, where he lit some scraps of paper. He threw them onto the corpses, which were immediately engulfed in flames. As the fire shot up, Goebbels, Bormann, and several others present stood at attention and gave the Nazi salute. A few hours later, the corpses seemed unidentifiable, although not completely consumed. The commander of the guard had them placed in a nearby shellhole and covered with earth. The Soviets later recovered Hitler's body and identified it by means of the bridgework described by his dentist.

It would be interesting to know what Magda Goebbels wished to say to Hitler, because she was contemplating a grotesque and peculiarly horrible suicide pact with her husband. They had come to Hitler's bunker with their six children, expecting they would never leave again. The children knew nothing of the suicide pact. They played cheerfully together and told visitors they were expecting to take a long trip. On the evening of May 1, Magda went into the children's rooms alone and returned in a state of nervous exhaustion. She and her husband then said their good-byes and walked up the stairs into the garden, Magda shaking so violently that she could scarcely walk. The Soviets later found their charred bodies lying on the floor of the bunker, where someone had unaccountably brought them. Goebbel's sharp, rodent-like features were still easily identifiable. The six children were lying in their rooms, the girls dressed in their nightgowns. Their mouths were burned by cyanide tablets, probably crushed by Magda Goebbels after she had given her children sleeping tablets. It was an unnatural act for a mother, but one in keeping with the spirit of the Third Reich.

Outside the sordid world of Hitler's bunker, Soviet troops by now were fighting a house-to-house battle for Berlin. On 23 April, Stalin had divided the city between Zhukov and Konev along a line extending from Luebben over Mariendorf to the Anhalter Railway Station. The Soviets advanced under cover of heavy artillery fire supplemented by bombing raids. Since the Western allies had already bombed large areas into ruins, much of this fire simply made the rubble bounce. The Germans offered strong resistance along the line of the Landwehr Canal and the Spree River. During the night of 28-29 April, elements of Zhukov's 3rd Shock Army crossed the Spree, attacking southwards over the Moltke Bridge. By 30 April, the Soviets had reached the old *Reichstag* building, still strongly defended despite the Soviet fire. During the afternoon, several Soviet infantry battalions broke into the building and fought from room to room using grenades and submachine guns.

The following day, 8th Guards Army secured the Tiergarten on the east-west axis through the famous Brandenburg Gate. On 1 May, following Hitler's suicide, the Army Chief of Staff, General Krebs, went to the command post of 8th Guards Army. Krebs fruitlessly argued for terms short of unconditional surrender, then returned to the bunker and shot himself. On the day after Kreb's visit, the Berlin garrison did surrender unconditionally. With hostilities at an end, the Soviets began to rape, loot, and take souvenir pictures of themselves. □



TOP: The battle over, victorious Red Army troopers dance to accordion music in the shadow of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Hitler had boasted that his Third Reich would last a thousand years—but it survived barely twelve. ABOVE: Adolf Hitler shot himself, while his wife took poison, in the room at right, and aides carried their bodies into the Chancellery garden. Where, they were burned in a shallow ditch. Later, the Soviets recovered the bodies and identified Hitler by means of his bridgework, with the help of his dentist. First, though, house-to-house fighting continued in Berlin for several days.

Bruce R. Pirnie, a U.S. Army historian, previously wrote on Kursk, Stalingrad and the Spanish Civil War for World War II *Magazine. As further readings, he suggests* The Last Battle *by Cornelius Ryan;* Inside the Third Reich *by Albert Speer, and* 23 Days, the Final Collapse of Nazi Germany *by Marlis G. Steinert.*

Assassination Victim Unmourned

Almost everyone despised French Admiral Francois Darlan. His assassin was quickly caught, but who else stood behind the political murder in North Africa?

By Arthur Layton Funk

On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, 1942, while French Algiers was preparing for the *Reveillon* celebrations, a Peugeot 302 holding four young men drove up to the great Summer Palace, headquarters of the French High Commissariat. The car drove away after depositing a young man of about 20, who then approached the guard.

He identified himself as "Morand," produced proper identification papers and stated that he had an appointment with an official inside. Had the youth been searched, the guards would have found that he carried a loaded Rubis 7.65, a military automatic comparable to a Colt .45. But he was not searched and, with permission granted to enter the palace grounds, he moved off—not in the direction of the office he had signed in for, but toward the office of the High Commissioner, Admiral Francois Darlan.

As the Admiral had not yet returned from lunch for a three o'clock appointment, the young man seated himself in the corridor outside the office. Moments later, Admiral Darlan approached, in conversation with an aide. As Darlan passed, the youth rose and fired point blank at the French Admiral.

The assassin attempted to flee but was hindered long enough by the aide, whom he shot in the thigh, to enable nearby guards to pin him down. He was immediately hustled off to military headquarters for interrogation. Darlan was taken to the Hospital Maillot, a half-hour's drive away. He died on the operating table.

It was extraordinary that an assassin, harboring a lethal weapon, could have entered Darlan's headquarters. But he did, and he succeeded in killing the High Commissioner. Why he did so, and with whose help, can now be reconstructed. With the death in 1974 of one of the principal conspirators, relevant memoirs have appeared. The chain of events, some details of which have remained obscure, can now be reconstructed.

Admiral Francois Darlan had been the second most important figure in French Marshal Henri Pétain's collaborationist government at Vichy. When his son fell ill with polio in Algiers, Darlan had flown down from France on November 7, 1942, to see him in the hospital. On the following day, the Allied forces of Operation TORCH landed in Morocco and Algeria, and Darlan found himself in the middle of a controversy.

At one o'clock on the morning of November 8, Darlan had been awakened and summoned to the residence of General Alphonse Juin, the military officer responsible for Algeria's defense. There he encountered Robert Murphy, President Roosevelt's personal representative in North Africa, who implored the French admiral to order a cease-fire. Darlan could have done this because he out-ranked every officer in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. But the Admiral, fearful that such an order would force Hitler to occupy southern France, backed and filled until American General Mark Clark arrived in Algiers on November 10. Under Clark's pressure, Darlan finally ordered a cease-fire and then, breaking with the Vichy regime, agreed to cooperate in the forthcoming campaign against the Germans. Thus, Admiral Darlan became High Commissioner for North Africa on behalf of the Allies.

The rapid advances of German infantry (seen here) and armored columns in France during May-June 1940 sent a tidal wave of shock through the French armed forces from which they never really recovered. Europe's best army was thus destroyed in a matter of a few weeks. With it, the French Third Republic also fell, and in its wake men more pliable to the Third Reich—Pétain, Laval and Darlan—came to power in the small French provincial town of Vichy.

The Americans had strong obligations to Darlan and they consistently supported him. But almost everyone else hated him. To many Frenchmen he personified all that was invidious about the Vichy regime: its collaborationist obeisance to Hitler, its anti-Semitic legislation, its suppression of democratic liberties.

For the Axis he was an untrustworthy Frenchman who had somersaulted from a position of apparently reliable collaboration into an enemy. For Marshal Pétain and Pierre Laval, the leaders of Vichy France, and for many career officers in the regular French Army and Navy, he was a traitor who had broken his oath of allegiance.

For Charles de Gaulle, head of the Free French with headquarters in London, Darlan stood as a formidable obstacle to the Gaullists' longstanding hope of controlling the 100,000 French troops stationed in North Africa. De Gaulle's attitude was shared by hundreds of French youths in North Africa who were ardent Gaullists.

Other patriotic groups, older and more conservative, believed that if Darlan were out of the way, they could foment some sort of agreement between de Gaulle and General Henri Giraud, who commanded the North African Army. Some members of this latter group, royalist by persuasion, believed even that they could persuade the pretender to the French throne, Henri Count of Paris, currently residing in Morocco, to serve as an umbrella under which the Gaullists and the Giraudists might unite.

After the assassination, it seemed reasonable to the French authorities that the murderer would ultimately be identified as representing one or more of these groups. But their first task was to find out who "Morand" really was and to make an example of him. Fortunately for them, the problem of identification posed no difficulty. Even before the assassin had been removed from the Summer Palace, he was recognized. He turned out to be Fernand Bonnier de la Chapelle, 20 years old, college student, son of a local

TOP: "Morand" was actually 20-year-old Fernand Bonnier de la Chapelle, a college student. ABOVE: Heinrich Himmler (left), his aide, SS General Karl Wolff (center) and German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (right). It was the latter's policy—at Hitler's direction—to foster "collaboration."

journalist. Known as a sincere and ardent young man, staunchly anti-German, he was a member of the French Free Corps, a tough, almost fanatical outfit which had volunteered for immediate active duty against Rommel.

The French authorities directed that Bonnier should be interrogated and put on trial immediately. In his official deposition, Bonnier denied having any accomplices. When the military court, convoked on Christmas Day, heard the testimony, they took Bonnier at his word and did not probe the case with any thoroughness. Sensing that complications would only delay a summary execution, the judges quickly found the young man guilty and sentenced him to death. He was executed at dawn on December 26—two days after the shooting.

Whether or not justice had been done, the case could not be dismissed so easily. Clearly Bonnier de la Chapelle did have accomplices. He had false identification papers; he had a plan of the Summer Palace showing the location of Darlan's office; he had on his person some American dollars, and he had used a military pistol. Gradually, clues began to surface. One of the interrogators revealed soon after the execution that Bonnier had given some unofficial testimony. This testimony, not provided to the court, brought forth names of two individuals: a young priest named Louis Cordier, and a civil servant in Darlan's administration named Henri d'Astier.

The *Abbé* Cordier was well known in Algiers. As priests are not exempt from military service in France, the *Abbé*, formerly associated with the Cathedral at Lyons, had fought against the Germans and then came to North Africa, where he served as an officer in the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse*, a Vichy youth organization. Cordier's immediate superior in the *Chantiers* was a charismatic member of an old French family, Henri d'Astier de la Vigerie. The priest and d'Astier were very close. The *Abbé* in fact actually lived with the d'Astiers. When the investigators learned that Cordier was involved, they naturally had to conclude that Henri d'Astier would somehow be implicated, too. Where then the trail would lead, they could not tell. But the possibilities—as d'Astier was a person with many contacts—were enough to give them pause.

First of all, Henri d'Astier had close associations with the American occupiers. He had been one of five key Resistance leaders who had conspired with Robert Murphy in an attempt to bring the Allies ashore without gunfire. After the Allied occupation, he had accepted a post in the Darlan administration. This position, Deputy Minister of the Interior, gave him direct supervision of the police office where identity cards were issued.

D'Astier was also a monarchist, personally well acquainted with the Count of Paris, and in close contact with the group of royalists who wished to replace Darlan with the French pretender. Finally, and surprisingly, he had a close personal tie with General de Gaulle. Henri's brother, Air Force General Francois d'Astier de la Vigerie, supported the Free French and was a member of the Free French Staff. Only five days before the assassination, de Gaulle had sent General d'Astier, his pockets crammed with $38,000 in American currency, on a mission to Algiers to study the situation and to advise de Gaulle on ways "to hasten unity in the war effort within the French overseas territories in association with the national Resistance and in cooperation with all the Allies." Henri d'Astier had played host to his brother, the General, and had been the recipient of the $38,000.

Of these various associations which linked Henri d'Astier to so many groups, it was the monarchist tie which investigators found most unexpected and fascinating. Could that link be related to the assassination?

As was well known, the royalists in Algiers hoped the French pretender could become a sort of neutral agent under whose aegis the two factions of French Resistance outside France—the North Africans under Giraud and the Free French under de Gaulle—could unite. The chaotic times indeed did provide an opportunity for some prestigious Frenchmen, such as a former president or prime minister, to step forward and act as the catalytic agent. But as no one had taken this step, the royalists were left with the impression that their candidate, the Count of Paris, would find support. To place an aura of legality over their designs, the monarchist followers had resurrected an old law, spawned in the convulsions of the Franco-Prussian war, which stated that the heads of whatever prefectures remained unoccupied could name a head of government. There were three prefects in Algeria, and they agreed to go along with the nomination of the Count of Paris. On December 10, the Count himself had visited Algiers, escorted by the *Abbé* Cordier, and he had agreed to cooperate. When General Francois d'Astier arrived ten days later, he was kept informed regarding the monarchist plan,

but he could not or would not make any commitment regarding de Gaulle's support.

The monarchist planners had every hope that persuasion, not force, would gain them their objective. They hoped that as a group they could call on Darlan, show him how the overall interests of France would be aided by his resignation, and then, with his cooperation, bring in the Count of Paris. They also hoped that this peaceful takeover would not be opposed by the American authorities. They approached Robert Murphy, who had known the Count for years, to obtain his support. But Murphy was dubious. He did not think the American people would understand how a pretender to the French throne could help in a war against totalitarianism. The monarchists were therefore forced to approach Darlan without any guarantee that the Allied occupiers would approve a new arrangement.

And what if Darlan refused? The *Abbé* Cordier was formulating a contingent plan for the elimination of Darlan with, as the saying goes nowadays, extreme prejudice. It was not very difficult to locate possible volunteers. Before the Anglo-American landings, about 300 patriotic young men had organized resistance groups to help the expected Allies. These were mostly university students, some French, some Arab, with Jews prominent among them. All of them detested Darlan and deplored their North African region's continuing connection with Vichyites. After the landings many of them would meet at the *Cafe Coq Hardi* and speak wildly about ways they could get rid of the collaborationist Admiral. The day before he died, Darlan revealed that his secret service knew of four different plots to assassinate him.

The *Abbé* Cordier had specific contacts with at least three groups: first, two young men, who constantly boasted to their pals of how ready they were to act; second, a group of activists which included Mario Faivre, a fierce veteran of the November 8 landing itself, and Bernard d'Astier, son of Henri d'Astier; third, a group of young soldiers from the French Free Corps, including Philippe Ragueneau (who admits in his memoirs that he originated the idea of eliminating Darlan), Bonnier de la Chapelle, and several others.

The latter group had almost moved to action. On November 19, its members had solemnly vowed that one of them would be the assassin. They drew straws to determine which one—and Bonnier agreed to accept the fatal responsibility. Several days later all the members of the Free Corps group—except Bonnier—were assigned to the front. Therefore, as Christmas approached, Bonnier remained alone, frustrated by lack of means, but determined with a cool passion to carry out the act entrusted to him by his colleagues.

At this point, fate intervened. By chance, Bonnier now met Henri d'Astier and the *Abbé* Cordier. Bonnier's fiancée lived in the same building as the d'Astiers. Bonnier had met Henri on the stairs, and had told him of his assassination plan. They agreed to remain in touch.

On December 20, the key event, which triggered all that followed, took place. The group of monarchists, accompanied by General Francois d'Astier, met with Admiral Darlan in the presence of North African Army Commander General Giraud. The Admiral ridiculed the plan out of hand. In no uncertain terms he declared that he was the only one who could rally the French in North Africa, that he had no intention of stepping down. Had he taken the hints and proposals offered to him, he might have saved his life.

But he did not. However indirectly, he forced the plotters to consider their next move. At this point, learning of Darlan's uncooperative reaction, the Count of Paris

TOP: Despised by the Allies as a collaborationist and feared by the Axis as a turncoat, French Admiral Francois Darlan was nevertheless a prominent part of the secret American plan to land unopposed in French-held North Africa, where Darlan was High Commissioner of the Vichy government. He failed in two of his most important aims, however—to save the French Fleet at Toulon and to keep unoccupied France free from Nazi invasion—and finally became the target of an assassin's bullet. ABOVE: The men at the top of the pro-German French government at Vichy were (from left to right) President Philippe Pétain, the hero of Verdun during World War I; Admiral Darlan, French High Commissioner in North Africa, and Premier Pierre Laval. At the end of the war, Pétain and Laval were convicted as collaborationists; the Marshal was imprisoned and later released by DeGaulle, while Laval was executed.

The German Army enters Paris, June 1940. The secret fear of Admiral Francois Darlan was that Hitler also would order the occupation of Vichy France late in 1942 if he struck a deal with the Allies.

decided to abandon the project. Suffering one or two attacks of malaria every day, he had become weakened by his illness and by the debilitating political activity of the past week. Shortly after the delegation's failure, the Count was asked by Henri d'Astier whether indeed Darlan should still be eliminated. According to some, including Henri d'Astier's wife, the Count said yes, by any means. But the Count vehemently denies in his memoirs that he gave any such approval. On December 22, he left Algiers to regain his strength in a nearby suburb.

On the following day the *Abbé* Cordier moved to action. As part of his contingent scheme he had arranged for false papers to be made, had obtained a plan of the Summer Palace, and had kept in his possession an old-fashioned duelling pistol. He had vetoed Mario Faivre's plan of a street ambush as too dangerous to bystanders. There remained Bonnier de la Chapelle. Cordier sought out Bonnier, assured him of cooperation in high places, and gave him his instructions. He explained how it would actually be possible to escape from Darlan's office and how an assassination could be blamed on an Axis agent.

The next morning, December 24, armed with the duelling pistol, Bonnier went to the Summer Palace. Learning that Darlan was not expected until the afternoon, he left. About noon, he went to the *Cafe Coq Hardi*, already filled with many students. There he ran across a friend, Roger Rosfelder, who happened to be in the company of Mario Faivre and Bernard d'Astier. Bonnier told them what he was planning to do and, as Mario had a car, asked them if they would drop him off later at the Summer Palace. They agreed, but meanwhile took Bonnier along while they did an errand in the suburbs.

During the trip, Bonnier expressed some doubts about his weapon. They decided to test it. It misfired. Thereupon Mario Faivre, who possessed a Rubis 7.65 which had recently been cleaned and checked, gave Bonnier his gun. They then drove to the Summer Palace and dropped Bonnier at the gate. And the fatal shooting then followed.

In his unofficial testimony after the assassination, Bonnier had admitted receiving a gun from the *Abbé* Cordier, but he did not mention Mario Faivre. Cordier always denied providing the murder weapon. Only after the *Abbé* Cordier died in 1974 and Mario Faivre wrote his own account has this discrepancy been clarified.

At first, right after the assassination, the French authorities imposed severe security regulations. In mid-January Henri d'Astier and Cordier were arrested. So uncertain was the political atmosphere in Algiers—no one could predict what the future power structure would be—that no one was anxious to probe too vigorously into the

details of Darlan's death. The hearings kept being postponed, and by June, when de Gaulle arrived in Algiers, no conclusions had been reached. Three months later the charges against d'Astier and Cordier were dropped. No full-length or complete inquiry into these events has ever taken place, although the main happenings, summarized here, have been subjected to exhaustive analysis by historians. D'Astier died shortly after the war. The *Abbé* Cordier returned to France and resumed his priestly profession, serving as Canon at Chateau Thierry until his death.

Thus it was, after a reign of less than 50 days, that Darlan no longer dominated the political scene. It was now necessary for the French to find a successor at once, if Allied martial law was to be avoided. The new French administrator could not be Charles de Gaulle, whom President Franklin Delano Roosevelt vehemently opposed. Nor could it be the Count of Paris, whom Murphy was unwilling to support. Only General Henri Giraud, the original American candidate, remained, and President Roosevelt ordered Eisenhower to have him appointed. This was hardly democratic, but the French administrators, unable to propose a more acceptable candidate, had to swallow their indignation. They promptly elected Giraud to succeed Darlan.

As a result, the impetuous and politically-inept General Giraud finally filled the niche which the Americans, with gullible enthusiasm, had originally carved out for him. That Giraud was a singularly poor choice cannot be blamed on the assassination. This was the man the Allies would have backed if Darlan had never appeared. This was the administrator they would have imposed if Darlan had been persuaded to retire. Sooner or later the Americans would have found themselves supporting Giraud as their champion, or even a possible replacement for de Gaulle as the leader of resisting Frenchmen. Unfortunately for them, they were now beginning to guess that they had chosen—in President Roosevelt's words—a slender reed.

Before assessing the consequences of the assassination, we should ask one question: would Darlan, since his military usefulness had waned, have been deposed by the Allies early in 1943? It would be difficult to argue that his presence or absence seriously affected the military campaign then raging on the Tunisian front.

To be sure, with his great authority and prestige among the military, and with his undisputed capacity as an administrator, Admiral Darlan brought the whole French bureaucracy and military machinery to cooperate with Eisenhower at a crucial time, in November 1942, when vital transportation and communication facilities were urgently needed. Without Darlan's cooperation, the Allies would have faced weeks of French in-fighting and slowdowns, and would perhaps have wasted time and manpower by enforcing a military occupation. However, as the weeks passed, Darlan became less essential. Having failed to rally the French fleet (which had been scuttled at Toulon), he had no great single achievement to his credit. And on Eisenhower's side, having failed to take Tunisia in the first six weeks, the American commander was forced gloomily to accept the prospect of a campaign that would stretch through a cold muddy winter into the spring of 1943. By this time the Allies would be established in North Africa with such force that from the military point of view it would not matter much who the French High Commissioner might be. The French, even if secretly pro-Vichy, would have to cooperate simply because their own interests required it.

Several weeks before his death, Darlan had become aware of pressure to ease him from his high office. Roosevelt had called the Clark-Darlan agreement a "temporary expedient" to offset the immediate outcry in the press. On November 21, Darlan had written Roosevelt to complain that once his usefulness terminated, it looked as if he were destined to be dropped like a crushed lemon. Mindful of the opposition to him, the Admiral had affirmed to the press on December 16 that he had no personal ambitions and that he would retire from public life when France was liberated.

But he would probably have been forced into retirement much earlier. At the time of Darlan's assassination, Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill had been arranging for the conference which ultimately began at Casablanca on January 14. To this meeting Giraud, as well as de Gaulle, was invited in order to confer with the Allied leaders. Could Darlan have been invited to Casablanca? Churchill could not have met him without arousing a hornet's buzz of protest from the House of Commons. For President Roosevelt, the situation would have been ticklish. A conference with Darlan would have been a grave political error, and the President could not possibly have backed Darlan as a counterbalance to de Gaulle. Darlan would have had to go. Some pretext would have been found to force his retirement.

Thus one can point to an immediate important consequence of the assassination: it relieved the Allied leaders from taking any action against Darlan. Giraud came in sooner than he otherwise would have. Then, because de Gaulle had no reason to accuse Giraud of a Vichy connection, the Free French felt no constraints against an exchange of notes with the new high commissioner. De Gaulle became the most obvious beneficiary of Darlan's elimination.

Had the Gaullists been involved in the murder? It should be recalled that shortly before the fatal Christmas Eve, de Gaulle had sent General Francois d'Astier to Algiers on a mission of inquiry, and had provided him with $38,000 for the Gaullist Resistance. Some of this money was in the assassin's possession. *Abbé* Cordier was once reported as saying that de Gaulle gave "the green light." But to implicate de Gaulle personally would take one beyond the limits of probability and logic. During the final week of December 1942, de Gaulle was arranging a personal visit to the White House—he was, in fact, on his way to the airport when news of the assassination in North Africa reached London.

De Gaulle was too capable, too far-sighted, to have sought a short-term advantage at the expense of a rapprochement with Roosevelt, from whom he had everything to gain. Nevertheless, the murder of Darlan did taint the Gaullists—the visit to Washington was cancelled by the White House. There is no evidence, however, that President Roosevelt harbored any malice from the purely circumstantial evidence when he met de Gaulle at Casablanca three weeks later. The two leaders did not get along, but their differences rested on large political issues.

Having shaken hands at Casablanca with Giraud, in the presence of Churchill and Roosevelt, de Gaulle pressed hard, thereafter, for a Free French transfer to Algiers. It took five months for him to get there, and in June he and Giraud, as co-chairmen, set up the French Committee of National Liberation. This arrangement lasted until November 1943, when de Gaulle was able to terminate the joint chairmanship, leaving himself as undisputed head of the Committee and leaving General Giraud simply commander-in-chief of French forces. It took de Gaulle another five months to force Giraud into retirement. De Gaulle thus held, in April 1944, clear mastery of the resistance effort outside the French mainland.

The elimination of Darlan, it can therefore be argued,

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The Fall of France in 1940 was dramatically and graphically demonstrated to the world by the Nazis, who brought this railway dining coach to the exact spot where the Germans had been forced to surrender to the Allies in 1918. Where once French Marshal Ferdinand Foch and his staff sat, now reigned German dictator Adolf Hitler (left, facing camera).

ultimately permitted de Gaulle to become provisional president of France.

Suppose Darlan had not been murdered? Would de Gaulle have still emerged triumphant? How can one say? An analysis of the steadfast, intelligent and not infrequently ruthless way in which de Gaulle obtained and maintained power would lead one to believe that he ultimately would have returned to France as leader—whatever the obstacles. De Gaulle did not need Darlan's assassination, but it accelerated his way to the summit.

The elimination of Darlan accomplished something else, felt by Frenchmen, scarcely noticeable for foreigners. It heralded the end of the Vichy stranglehold on North Africa and opened the windows to a more liberal atmosphere. This was not simply a matter of de Gaulle coming to North Africa, for the liberalization process had begun earlier. So long as Darlan remained in power, however, he was identified by most Frenchmen as representing Pétain, as supporting the pro-fascist, authoritarian, anti-Semitic attitudes which Vichy symbolized. This was true even though Darlan took some steps to nullify the most obnoxious clauses of Vichy legislation.

When Giraud came in, the atmosphere began to change. General Giraud, in spite of his arch-conservative background, was susceptible to pressure, especially to that exerted by his new adviser, Jean Monnet. He began to make gestures in the direction of democracy. As a result, some of the more reactionary politicians began to fade away, to be replaced by others, not necessarily Gaullists, but people who represented the spirit of Republican France. By the end of 1943, with the formation of a Consultative Assembly, representatives of the Resistance, including communists, came to North Africa in large numbers.

If Darlan had remained in control this could not have happened. It is even possible that there would have been a civil war in France. De Gaulle was statesman enough to know that to survive as leader, he had to gain support from all elements of the French Underground. With Darlan gone, it was possible to develop in North Africa a true anti-Vichy spirit and administration, and to ensure that when France was liberated, a democratic and republican form of government would emerge. The assassination of Darlan cried out to many Frenchmen as a symbol: it was a voice of resisting France saying to the Allies: "This is what we think of the proconsuls you impose upon us; we fight to cleanse ourselves from the stench of collaboration; don't make our fight more difficult."

Finally, did the Western Allies, especially the Americans, learn anything from their involvement with Darlan and from his assassination? When the Clark-Darlan agreement was announced, a furor developed. Columnist Walter Lippmann denounced the arrangement as contrary to Allied war aims; Jews everywhere writhed at the thought that Vichy anti-Semitism was being transferred to North Africa; British parliamentarians protested so vigorously that Churchill had to calm them by placing the blame on the Americans. Soon Roosevelt apologetically called the arrangement a "temporary expedient." Later, with Darlan gone, the President would declare that Allied war aims accepted only "unconditional surrender," thereby announcing to dubious communists, anti-fascists, Jews, and especially to the Kremlin, that no more deals with collaborationists would be made.

The error of supporting a Vichy leader had been given dramatic emphasis by the assassination. Just as world attention focused on Serbian ambitions after Sarajevo in 1914, so a startled public learned on Christmas Eve, 1942, how deeply held among French patriots was the antipathy to Darlan, Vichy, and all collaboration. The assassination demonstrated that ideology could not be side-stepped, that deals and maneuvers with dubious politicians stirred deep and vital emotions. □

Arthur Layton Funk, professor emeritus of history at the University of Florida, is the author of the related book The Politics of TORCH: The Allied Invasion and the Algiers "Putsch" 1942. *As further readings available in English (in addition to a number published in France), the memoirs of Dwight Eisenhower, Robert Murphy and Mark Clark provide some details. Also relevant are:* The Murder of Admiral Darlan *by Peter Tompkins;* French Royalism *by Samuel Osgood, and* Setting Europe Ablaze *by Douglas Dodds-Parker.*

Identifying The Enemy

Early in the war, an isolationist America's young draftees weren't too sure whom they were fighting—or even why. The Army enlisted Hollywood help for powerful documentary films that would overcome the "attitudinal gap" in highly idealized style.

By Gregory D. Black

Just like in the movies, Hollywood director Frank Capra was busy "shooting" a movie when two U.S. Army officers appeared on the set and dramatically interrupted things. It was Monday, December 8, 1941—the day after Pearl Harbor. The film under production at the moment was *Arsenic and Old Lace* (with Cary Grant, among others), and the two strangers who interrupted the shooting were from the Army's Signal Corps.

They were there to swear Capra into the Army, courtesy of General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff. Six weeks later, Major Frank Capra, complete with a wardrobe of freshly tailored uniforms, reported for duty in Washington. America was at war—and so, too, would be Capra, but in a most unusual way.

It would be Capra's job to explain the war to the millions of newly inducted citizen soldiers shipping out to distant fighting fronts all over the world. Along with many others in Washington, Army Chief of Staff Marshall had good reason to wonder if the new troops really understood why America was in the war. If the GI didn't understand the real issues, would he be willing to undergo the sacrifices necessary to defeat the enemy? Did he really know who they were, what they stood for, what defeat might mean for the world of the future? How did the GI view America's allies?

When such questions were put to young draftees, Marshall was dismayed at the lack of understanding they exhibited. The troops knew next to nothing about the nature of fascism. Many repeated popularly held beliefs that America had no quarrel with Hitler, and large numbers saw the war as merely a repetition of World War I.

To counteract these perceptions, the Army attempted to "orient" new troops by instituting a series of lectures on world politics and the events leading up to the war in Europe and Asia. The lectures were conducted during basic training, but after a full day of training, they succeeded only in putting the new soldiers to sleep. Even Marshall admitted that the lectures were "unsatisfactory." A different method had to be found to instruct the troops on why America was at war.

Not surprisingly, Marshall selected film. In the early 1940's films were a regular part of the American lifestyle. The new "civilian army" had grown up on a steady diet of Hollywood fare. On the eve of World War II the industry was at the peak of its popularity, grinding out more than 500 feature films every year to satisfy the demands of some 90 million Americans who went to the movies every week. American films dominated world screens, with up to 80 percent of all films shown in the world originating in Hollywood. Convinced that film could instruct and motivate as well as entertain, Marshall turned to Hollywood for help in teaching his army why America was suddenly thrust into a new world conflict. He envisioned a series of orientation films which would explain to the troops why World War II was America's war.

Film had long been recognized as a medium for entertainment, information, persuasion and propaganda. In World War I, George Creel's Committee on Public Information had effectively used Hollywood to raise money for the war effort and produce entertainment films to generate "hate-the-Hun" propaganda. With the rise of National Socialism in Germany, film had been used to glorify Hitler and the achievements of his Reich. Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, with its deification of Hitler and its glorification of war, both moved and frightened millions of people. Perhaps no other film, before or since, had affected its audience with such compelling force . . . whether or not one agreed with it.

Marshall believed that film likewise could be used to convince the average American draftee that democracy and freedom were important values worth fighting for. Film could be used to illustrate, as no lecture could, how American values were threatened by fascism. He believed that once the common soldier understood these issues, he would be willing to make the sacrifices necessary for victory.

The result of Marshall's conception would be the *Why We Fight* series of seven orientation films. Originally, the films were to be shown to Army personnel about to be shipped overseas. Before the war ended, though, the films were shown throughout all the armed forces, to civilian

In the Why We Fight *films, "The world was divided into a free world and a slave world." The Germans—seen here invading Russia in 1941—were depicted as ruthless gangsters.*

audiences in America, and to military and civilian audiences overseas. By the end of the war an estimated 45 million people had seen at least one film in the series.

The man Marshall selected to film *Why We Fight* was Frank Capra, a choice bypassing the Signal Corps for one of Hollywood's most popular and successful directors. In many ways Capra was a natural choice. His family had immigrated in the early 1900s from Palermo, Sicily, to California. With his father working as an orange picker to support a family of seven children, Capra knew poverty but also saw that America was indeed a land of opportunity. He worked his way through the California Institute of Technology, graduating in 1918 with a degree in chemical engineering. After a brief stint in the Army, Capra drifted for several years before he landed in Hollywood. Beginning as an apprentice in a film lab, he progressed to gag writer for the Hal Roach studios and then began directing Harry Langdon comedies. As they say in the trade, his big break came when Harry Cohn gave him a contract to direct for Columbia. In 1934 with *It Happened One Night*, Capra won his first Academy Award in directing and was thrust into the national limelight. Capra followed with a series of films: *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and *Meet John Doe* (1941), which established his reputation as also a champion of the common man. In each of these films, a young, idealistic person becomes a hero by successfully fighting the anti-democratic forces of a cynical, materialistic society. Honesty triumphed over greed, simplicity over sophistication. Capra, a real-life Horitio Alger, was a perfect choice to produce Marshall's inspirational messages of why America fought.

Upon arriving in Washington after his dramatic swearing-in, Capra was not assigned to the Signal Corps, but to General Frederick H. Osborn's newly created Morale Branch. Bureaucratic infighting erupted almost immediately as Capra and Osborn tried to outflank the Signal Corps. At issue was who would actually make the films. The Signal Corps believed Capra's role was to oversee the completion of an acceptable script and then turn that script over for production. Capra, whose ego knew no bounds, was equally determined that he would make the films. Convinced that the Signal Corps was only capable of making "how to" training films, he and Osborn fought for independence.

"It would have been stupid, if not disloyal, to allow the inspirational *Why We Fight* films to be made by Signal Corps colonels," Capra later wrote. In the end Capra won—a special unit, the 834th Signal Service Photographic Detachment, was created specifically to produce the *Why We Fight* film series. Fleeing from Washington, Capra returned to the friendly turf of Hollywood, where the 834th was housed in the old Fox studio on Western Avenue.

Capra admitted that when he began the project he knew nothing about documentary film, which he once labeled "ash-can films made by kooks with long hair." That was until he saw Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, which mesmerized, terrified and yet fascinated him. It was, he wrote, "a master stroke of god-building." In screening and re-screening that film, the American director hit on a concept for his own series of films that would result in the best documentary films produced by the United States during the war—a series that would win Capra an Academy Award for documentary film. Capra decided to use captured enemy film, propaganda films and newsreels in constructing a portrait of the enemy. "Use the enemy's own film to expose their enslaving ends. Let our boys hear the Nazis and the Japs shout their own claims of master-race crud—and our fighting men will know why they are in uniform."

In Washington he had hired writer Eric Knight, and when he arrived on the West Coast he added James Hilton, Robert Heller, Anthony Veiller and William L. Shirer (of *Berlin Diary* Fame) to his writing staff. As co-director he selected Anatole Litvak. Litvak, a Russian, had directed a series of successful films in Europe during the early 1930s and was invited to Hollywood in 1937. In 1939 he directed *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*. He became an American citizen in 1942 and joined the Army to work with Capra. As narrators, Capra hired screen actor Walter Huston, whose raspy, down-home style marked the series, and writer Anthony Veiller. For his musical score Capra recruited Dimitri Tiomkin, another Russian emigre. When the

ATTITUDES IN TIME OF WAR

The *Why We Fight* films offer an opportunity to examine the American propaganda message of World War II.

When the Japanese launched their surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, they not only caught the military by surprise, they also caught the nation by surprise. The United States in late 1941 was psychologically, as well as militarily, unprepared for war. Isolationism had been the underpinning of American foreign policy for two decades following World War I, with a generation of Americans being taught that the American entry into World War I was a tragic mistake, that European political differences were not important to American security and that American interests were best served by non-involvement in world conflict.

While World War II is often presented as a war in which the issues were crystal clear—fascism vs. democracy—slavery vs. freedom—the issues in 1941 were far from clear. As late as April 1939, polls indicated an incredible 95 percent of the American people were opposed to an American entry into a general European war. While that percentage declined steadily over the next two years, in August 1941, with Hitler's army in control of most of Europe and driving deep into the Soviet Union, the House of Representatives passed an extension of the Selective Service by one vote! One month later, isolationist Senators Gerald P. Nye (North Dakota) and Burton K. Wheeler (Montana) accused the Hollywood film industry of producing pro-interventionist films designed to trick the American people into

The Nazis, too, made wartime propaganda films to bolster the Axis home front. This is a scene from the 1942 German film The Great King, *directed by Veit Harlan, about Frederick the Great.*

Walt Disney studio then agreed to do all the animation necessary for the films, Capra and his all-star cast began their work in earnest.

Capra and Marshall had conceived of a series of seven films which would illustrate to the troops why the war started, who the enemy was, who the Allies were, and lastly a cameo view of American history emphasizing how America and Americans came to the realization that World War II was their war. The first film was *Prelude to War*, which concentrated on the Japanese role of aggression in Asia. Capra followed *Prelude* with *The Nazis Strike* and *Divide and Conquer*, both illustrating the German responsibility for war in Europe. Then a series of three films—*The Battle of Britain*, *The Battle of Russia* and *The Battle of China*—established the Allies as nations dedicated to the principles of freedom and democracy. The final film in the series, *War Comes to America*, was Capra's version, "Capracorn" to his critics, of the development of the American character. While Capra's unit made other films during the war, these seven films comprised the *Why We Fight* series.

As the first film released, *Prelude to War* had its premiere in October 1942. Screened for military brass hats, Cabinet members and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *Prelude to War* was everything Marshall had hoped for, and more. Roosevelt loved the film so much so that administration officials began to think almost immediately of releasing the film to the general public. It took months of bureaucratic in-fighting before the film *was* released—it then received a lukewarm reception at the box-office, but critical acclaim that included the Academy Award as the best documentary film for 1942. *Prelude* featured all the elements that came to be associated with the series in both style and content: heavy use of newsreel footage combined with striking visual graphics, rapid cutting, a simple but forceful narration style, and powerful music.

Prelude to War opens with scenes of returning World War I troops on parade. Why, Walter Huston asks, are we on the march again? Is it because of Pearl Harbor? The question is followed by several minutes of newsreel footage of the attack. Are we at war because of Britain?

In another Capra film, The Battle of China, *the problem of corruption in the government of Chiang Kai-Shek was skirted. In this speech, given in India, China's Generalissimo stresses cooperation with the British Empire against Japan.*

Because of France? Because of China? Because of Poland? Each question was followed by grim, grisly scenes of war. No, the troops are told, we are not at war because of the attack on Pearl Harbor or in defense of the nations already at war. The United States is at war because the world has been divided into two parts—a free world (our world) and a slave world.

The opening sequences of the film worked to establish that America was at war to defend its liberty and its way of life. This point was made time and time again throughout the series, to dispel any lingering doubts the troops might have that they were refighting World War I. *Prelude to War* identified Germany, Italy and Japan as outlaw nations and their leaders—Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese leadership—as world-stage gangsters. Hitler and his Nazi Party "ruthlessly set out to murder the newborn German Republic," the film told the soldiers. Mussolini was "an ambitious rabble-rouser," and Japan was controlled by a "little gang of fanatical worshippers of the god-emperor."

Always, the leadership was shown in the worst possible light.

These masters of the slave world, the film continued, rose to power through murder and then proceeded to enslave the people. In each country, the troops were told, political opposition was eliminated, the free press became a propaganda arm of the government spreading "lies, lies, and more lies," freedom of religion was eliminated and replaced with forced adoration of the national leader.

While the film established the fact that religious leaders and political opponents of Hitler were put in concentration camps or murdered, *Prelude* sidestepped what should have been a powerful propaganda item for America—Germany's policy of a "final solution" for European Jewry. Hitler's persecution of the Jews had long been known

war. The isolationists charged that the film industry was producing pro-war, pro-New Deal, pro-Franklin Roosevelt propaganda with such films as *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, *the Mortal Storm*, and Charlie Chaplin's satire on Hitler, *The Great Dictator*. The movie industry fought the charges and hired the 1940 Republican presidential nominee, Wendell Willkie, as the industry's counsel. The "investigation" collapsed when Nye was forced to admit that he had not seen any of the offending films. Yet the hearings, illustrated the depth of opposition to America's involvement in another war.

The America of 1941 was also a highly segregated and racially divided society. Black Americans, who followed W.E.B. DuBois's plea to "close the ranks," had enlisted in the "crusade for democracy" in World War I, only to see their hopes crushed. Two decades of continued segregation made blacks view the impending international crisis with deep-seated apathy. While the racism of Nazi Germany made blacks shudder, the Japanese were viewed as a fellow "people of color." In early 1942, a government survey in Harlem discovered that nearly one-half of the respondents believed that they would be treated no worse by the Japanese than they were by white America. In that same survey only one percent responded that a Nazi victory would improve their status. The survey did not mean that blacks were disloyal. But it did measure the extent to which they felt betrayed by promises of fighting a war for democracy for a nation which denied them "equal access" and refused to allow them to fight alongside white soldiers.

In short, the American people were far from united in their views over the wisdom of involvement in another war when the Japanese struck.

Combat photographers—both Allied and Axis—served with the troops on all the fighting fronts of World War II, such as this British team aboard ship covering the Battle of the North Atlantic.

in the United States and enough knowledge of Hitler's "final solution" was available in 1942 to be included in a propaganda film designed to convince American soldiers that fascism was an evil that had to be eradicated. After all, this was a propaganda film. Yet the issue was avoided, and the film gave the impression that Nazi Germany only opposed religious leaders who were political opponents to the regime. No indication of the real nature of anti-Semitism was given to the troops.

It is also interesting to note that while the general direction of American war propaganda was to distinguish the people of Germany, Italy and Japan from their wanton leaders, the *Why We Fight* films, and especially *Prelude to War*, made little attempt to exonerate the enemy peoples from their responsibilities. The film said the Italian people had two choices—democracy or Mussolini. They allegedly chose Mussolini and the path to war and destruction. In Germany, the people were totally in support of Hitler, while the Japanese people generally also backed their military government.

Capra used a typical propaganda style in illustrating the nature of the enemy people. Instead of showing the enemy as individuals, as people who love their children, who live normal lives, the film created the image that the enemy people were mindless robots. In the films they possessed no individual characteristics. The military mentality of the German people was illustrated by long sequences of goose-stepping soldiers marching to a drum beat. Time and time again Hitler, "or one of his stooges," was shown speaking before a mass rally of Germans who erupted into a frenzy of "Heil Hitlers." School children were also mindless worshippers of the new god Adolf Hitler. In Italy the robots followed the "buffoon" Mussolini, while hordes of Japanese shouted "banzi" in support of a policy of aggression against their neighbors.

But what of the GI's own world, narrator Huston suddenly asked. The transformation was immediate. From dark, somber images and military music, the film fades to America. Here a bright, cheerful image hits the screen, as the narrator asks the audience what was America doing while all this was going on? Here another key—and political—element in the Capra films emerged. The American people shared complicity in the rise of fascism because they supported a policy of isolation after the last war. What were we doing, the film asked. We were disarming! We attempted to "outlaw war" when we signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and our college students demonstrated for peace because "we the people" did not want to understand that our prosperity depended on the rest of the world. Collective security was the key to peace, not anti-war treaties, the film preached.

The civics lesson continued. There were two very important dates to remember. Yes, everyone remembered December 7, 1941. But what about September 18, 1931? It was the most important of the two dates, the soldiers were told, because it marked the beginning of the war. Doubtless, few GI's in the audience would have guessed. It was in September 1931, 6,000 miles from San Francisco, that the Japanese adopted their blueprint for world conquest—the Tanaka Memorial—that called for a Japanese invasion of the United States. "Yes, the conquering Jap army marching down Pennsylvania Avenue, that was the final goal," Huston told the troops.

While the Tanaka plan has been recognized for some time as a hoax, and there were many during the war who questioned its veracity, *Prelude to War* presents it as documented fact (in the same film that ignored the Holocaust). The first step was the 1931 invasion of Manchuria, to be followed rapidly by a conquest of China, Australia, the eastern half of Russia and then on to America. With Disney animation providing illustrated maps, the march of the Rising Sun across Asia, north into Russia and then from the Bering Straits on to Washington was put before the troops. In the meantime, they were told, Hitler would be dominating Europe, launching invasions of Africa, from which he would "leap" to South America before "hooking up with his buck-toothed friends in Washington." Again, the narration was rapid-paced, with illustrated maps showing the collapse of Asia, Europe, and South America, followed by the "inevitable" invasion of the United States.

In 55 minutes, *Prelude to War* reviewed the history of the 1930s as seen from Capra's perspective. The film established all three enemy states as aggressors bent on

world conquest, with a clear intent to invade the United States. America had not been tricked into a war, but now was fighting a desperate battle against the best-armed, best-trained armies in the world. A war might have been avoided if the American people had been willing to embrace the policies of collective security, the film claimed, but now we had no choice.

The next two films, *The Nazis Strike* and *Divide and Conquer*, concentrated on German responsibility for starting World War II in Europe. While *Prelude* stressed Japanese treachery, *The Nazis Strike* and *Divide and Conquer* established German duplicity in Europe. *The Nazis Strike* opened by telling the troops that Hitler was just one in a long series of German leaders who "lusted" for world conquest. From Otto Von Bismarck in the 1800s, to the Kaiser Wilhelm II, to Hitler was a straight continuum for world conquest in German history. Germany, and the German people, were responsible for some 20 million casualties in the last 75 years in their "passion" for world domination. The "symbols and the leaders might change, but the German urge to control the world continues from generation to generation," the film claimed.

Why was Germany on the march once again? What gave Hitler the signal that aggression would be tolerated? It was the refusal of the democracies to stand up to the Japanese in Manchuria and the Italians in Ethiopia, the troops were again reminded. That gave Hitler the encouragement he needed to begin his own road of conquest.

War had come to Europe because collective security had failed, was the political statement. In each case of aggression, direct quotes from Hitler were used stating that he had no intention of taking Austria, Czechoslovakia or Poland, followed by quick cuts to newsreel footage of German troops storming into those nations. The Munich Crisis was used to illustrate the refusal of the democracies to stand up to aggression. According to *The Nazis Strike*, only one nation understood the necessity of collective action—Soviet Russia.

At this point the film sought to justify the brutal attack of the Russians on the beleaguered Polish. Russia moved into Poland, the film claimed, after pleading with the League of Nations for a united action against Hitler. When it became apparent that the democracies were not going to act, Russia allegedly took the only action it could. It advanced into Poland to challenge the German armies. According to the narrator, "Hitler could take on the Russians, or he could call it quits." Afraid of a two-front war, Hitler turned his attention westward. Our allies, the Soviet Union, the film announced, had temporarily halted German aggression.

Divide and Conquer portrayed the German campaign against Norway, Holland, Belgium and France. With the use of maps and long lecture sequences, the military tactics of the German attack were explained in great detail. In Norway, Quisling and "treacherous fifth columnists" betrayed a democratic people. In the Low Countries, the Germans used their newly developed *Blitzkreig* to overrun small, defenseless nations. Civilian populations were attacked at will, "a new low in inhumanity," even for the Germans. France was described as a cynical, disillusioned nation still suffering from the agony of the First World War. France was ready for defeat, the troops were told, because her leaders were "old and tired."

The first three films in the series established the enemies' goals of world conquest. The soldier audience was told repeatedly that America had no choice in entering the war. The enemy, with their plans of world conquest, would not be satisfied with mere territorial gains in Asia or Europe, but were engaged in a coordinated plan to enslave the world. Their plans included an invasion of the United States. But there were nations that were fighting against the fascist states. America's democratic allies were not tricked by fascist propaganda. The people had risen to fight in defense of their liberty.

TOP: Frank Capra (right), seen here in Army uniform, was chosen to make the pro-Allied films because he was one of Hollywood's most popular and successful directors of the day. ABOVE: Capra wasn't the only one making movies about World War II for domestic viewing. Here, U.S. Army Signal Corps lensmen Sgt. Carl L. Weinke (left) and Pfc. Ernest B. Marjoram are shown on New Guinea in April 1944.

To show the American soldier he was not fighting alone, Capra produced three films on the Allies. Long before America "woke up" to her responsibility, these nations had been fighting and dying in defense of liberty, the troops were told. The films produced, as might be expected, an idealized version of each of the nations and carefully sidestepped controversial issues. *The Battle of Britain* did not raise the issue of British class structure or imperialism. The issues of communism and totalitarianism were missing from *The Battle of Russia*. In the *Battle of China* the problem of corruption in Chiang K'ai-shek's government was not discussed.

The first film in the ally series was *The Battle of Britian*. The film opens with the shadow of conquering German armies looming over a map of Europe. All that stands in the way of a Nazi victory is Britain. Using newsreel footage, the film shows Hitler as a "tourist" admiring his conquests—in Paris he views the Eiffel Tower, then on to Calais, where he looks longingly across the English Chan-

nel at his next victim. With a rapid cut to Hitler and his generals poring over maps, the film announces the German battle plan. First, the German *Luftwaffe* would deliver a quick blow to eliminate the Royal Air Force. The second step would be to soften Britian by intensive bombing, and then German paratroopers would start the first step in the invasion. Finally, a full-scale invasion would be launched. Then, as the animated maps illustrated, a dual invasion from Asia and Europe would be launched against the United States. The British were not only fighting for their freedom, they were fighting to prevent Hitler and the Japanese from completing the next step in their plans for the conquest of America.

But the people of Britain stood in their way. The people knew, the film said, that Hitler would enslave them, and the people formed a "citizen army" to resist German aggression. This concept of a people's army was something "the Germans could never understand." In a democracy it is "the people who make war," not the government. This theme was consistent in the three films on the Allies—it was always the people who were defending their homeland against invasion.

The Battle of Britain proceeded to use stark newsreel footage of the German airwar against England. The first stage was fought over "the White Cliffs of Dover," where the Royal Air Force inflicted tremendous losses on the *Luftwaffe*, "smashing the Nazi plan of conquest." The narrator told the troops that *Luftwaffe* Commander Hermann Göring and the Nazis were "blind with rage" over their failures. The German mind allegedly was incapable of understanding how "a democratic people fight against overwhelming odds."

The German answer to its inability to defeat the RAF was to abandon all "pretext of aiming at military objectives." German tactics were now "savage destruction" aimed at civilians, at churches, at hospitals, at the rich and the poor. With the use of newsreel footage, the film illustrated the destruction in London. But the "frantic Nazis" were unable to bomb the people into submission.

The Nazis suffered the loss of some 2,375 planes, and with those planes went the "myth of Nazi invincibility." While the British people suffered horribly, "some 40,000 men, women and children killed," these people had stopped the Nazi advance. Why did the Germans lose? According to the film, they lost because a regimented people met a free people.

This same theme emerged even more strongly in *The Battle of Russia*, Capra's salute to the Soviet ally. The war, as the Hollywood trade journal *Variety* observed in 1942, "has put Hollywood's traditional conception of the Muscovites through the wringer, and they have come out shaved, washed, sober, good to their families, Rotarians, brother Elks, and 33rd Degree Masons." The observation made by *Variety* was apt. America's popular media did somersaults in constructing a new image of the Soviet Union that would mesh with wartime alliance. The brutal, bloodthirsty Stalin of the 1930s' purges, became "Uncle Joe," a man of vision who was leading his nation in battle against the fascist enemy. The Soviet Union, a communist totalitarian state to most Americans in the 1930s, became Russia, a nation moving toward "evolutionary democracy."

Hollywood also was caught up in this movement to recast the Soviet Union. In 1943 Warner Brothers released *Mission to Moscow*, which presented pre-war Russia as a nation united behind a progressive leadership. The film whitewashed the bloody purge trials of the 1930s as necessary responses to spies, saboteurs and fifth columnists who were stooges of Germany and Japan. That same year, Lillian Hellman's overly glorified story of Ukrainian resistence to the Nazi invasion, *North Star*, was released. MGM celebrated the new friendship with a musical, *Song of Russia*. While Hollywood was to be embarassed by these films in the postwar period, withdrawing most of them from circulation under pressure from the House of Un-American Activities Committee, the film industry was hardly alone in its effusive praise of Russia.

Time magazine described Lenin as "a normal, well-balanced man who was dedicated to rescuing 140,000,000 people from a brutal and incompetent tyranny," and selected Stalin as its "man of the year." Once more discerning publications such as *Saturday Evening Post, Collier's* and *Reader's Digest* heaped praised on the wartime ally. *Life*, one of the most widely read popular magazines of the war years, told its readers not to worry about the apparent lack of individual freedoms in Russia. If the Russian leaders say it is necessary to get the job done, then simply accept it and get on with winning the war. After all, *Life* reminded its readers, the Russians were "one hell of a people," who "look like Americans, dress like Americans, and think like Americans."

The Battle of Russia was created in this atmosphere of wartime cooperation and must be seen in that light. The film sidestepped the nature of the Soviet government. There is no mention of communism, collectivization, totalitarianism, or any other feature of modern Russia that might have been embarassing or controversial. Stalin's Non-Aggression Pact with Nazi Germany was brushed aside as a necessary evil that the Russians used to buy time to prepare for the eventual German attack. The film is centered on the traditional love of the Russian people for "Mother Russia." As with Britain, it was the people who were fighting the enemy.

When the troops were mustered for their lesson on Russian history, they were treated to one of the technically better films in the series. Writer and sometime film critic James Agee labeled it the most important war film ever made in America. Litvak, who directed the film, used newsreel footage, staged and re-enacted scenes, and feature films to construct a fast-paced, tough image of a nation fighting a desperate battle for survival of its culture. Divided into two parts, the film ran some 83 minutes. As a tribute to the Russian people, it was superb.

By avoiding controversial issues the film concentrated on showing Russia as a nation state that, regardless of its contemporary government, had fought many battles against foreign invaders to maintain its independence. Using scenes from Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), the film opened with Russian peasants uniting in 1242 to drive out an invading army of German Teutonic knights. Under Peter the Great the people united to drive out Swedish invaders. Again in 1812, the Russian people and the Russian winter combined to defeat Napoleon. In 1914 an earlier German army attempted to conquer Russia. This time the Russians were not only fighting an invading army, the troops were told, but also "oppression and corruption in their own country." This comment was the only allusion to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the Russian withdrawal from the war.

The second half of the film, and certainly the most powerful, was devoted to the battles of Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad. The seige of Leningrad lasted 17 months, the troops were told. Throughout one of the coldest winters in Russian history, the people of Leningrad resisted the German army. The people were bombarded; they worked, slept, fought and died in homes and factories that had no running water and no heat, yet they refused to surrender to superior German forces. The Russians, accustomed to cold winters, carried on despite the condi-

tions. In fact, they made the miserable winter work to their advantage. While Leningrad was cut off from overland supply routes, the winter was so cold that Lake Ladoga was frozen solid. The Russians trucked in food and medical supplies, rescued children and wounded civilians and soldiers, and finally in the spring went on the attack, routing the Germans, who were unable to cope with the savage Russian winter and a determined Russian people. "Generals may win campaigns, but people win wars," the film stated.

The Capra unit continued the themes of "the people" and "the land" in the last of the films devoted to the allies—*The Battle of China*. The filmmakers faced a major task when they undertook the job of creating an image of China as a modern democracy fighting aggression under the enlightened leadership of Chiang K'ai-shek's Kuomintang Party. While FDR appointed China as one of the "four policemen" of the world and poured millions of dollars worth of war supplies into China, Chiang often avoided the Japanese and instead fought the Chinese peasant communism of Mao Tse-tung.

As with the Soviet Union, the image of wartime China had to be that of a nation striving for modernity and democracy. The popular media played its part in constructing a favorable image as it ground out material promoting the Chinese. The Office of War Information told Hollywood that "China is a great nation, cultured and liberal, with whom, inevitably, we will be bound in the world that is to come." The film capital responded with *Flying Tigers* (1942) a tribute to General Claire Chennault's pilots (especially John Wayne, who leads the Chinese to victory against the Japanese). In *China* (1943), Alan Ladd and Lorraine Day fall in love while fighting for a democratic China. Even Katharine Hepburn was thrust onto the screen, as a Chinese guerrilla "freedom fighter" in *Dragon Seed* (1944). Capra's *Battle of China* was just one of many promotions for China.

Released in July 1944, the film opened with a basic geography lesson for the troops. (This was probably necessary since an opinion poll taken in May 1942 for the Office of War Information revealed that 40 percent of the American people could not locate China on a blank map.) With a map of China superimposed over a map of the United States, the troops were informed that China was one-third larger, had 450,000,000 people (shots of smiling Chinese filled the screen), or 20 percent of the world's population. The people of China, the film said, were not a war-like people and had "never waged a war of conquest" in 4,000 years of recorded history—a piece of misinformation that many peoples of Southeast Asia would have found amusing.

But the Japanese *were* war-like. With another detailed rehashing of the Tanaka Memorial, the film told the troops that Japan's dream of world conquest started with China. How could a small nation like Japan hope to conquer China? The answer to that question lay in the nature of the people. Both nations were exposed to modern Western science and technology. The Chinese, under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen, whom the film compared to George Washington, built schools, colleges and hospitals. They tried to modernize China for the benefit of the people. In sharp contrast, the Japanese, under the leadership of the "god-emperor and fanatical war-lords," copied Western technology to build a war machine.

The Japanese launched their war machine against China in 1931. But China, the soldiers were told, was not a unified nation in 1931 and therefore was unable to respond. In 1937 the Japanese enlarged their aggression against the Chinese with their attack on Shanghai. With graphic detail

If Why We Fight *revealed Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo as ruthless, power-hungry rulers bent on global conquest, the Allied leaders—Stalin, FDR and Churchill (seen here at the Tehran Conference late in 1943)—were naturally just the opposite. Note the still photographers and motion-picture crew on the steps.*

the film illustrated the Japanese "rape of Shanghai" and their bloody attack on Nanking. These actions, the film stated, did something the Japanese had not planned on—they united the Chinese people under the leadership of Chiang K'ai-shek.

From this point on, the film attempted to illustrate the heroic fight of the Chinese people. Yet the film lacked the powerful impact that *The Battle of Britain* and *The Battle of Russia* possessed. While the scenes of Japanese atrocities were horrible testimonies to the brutality of modern war, the attempt to illustrate the heroic nature of the Chinese under the leadership of Chiang emerged as disturbingly propagandistic. The films on Britain and Russia had been able to show tremendous victories over the enemy, but in China no such dramatic victories emerged. Instead, the film was forced to preach that the Chinese were constantly retreating into the interior to buy time for a "future offensive." The internal conflict between Chiang and Mao's communists was explained away by telling the troops that Chinese farmers, behind Japanese lines, turned into "guerrilla armies" by night to constantly engage the Japanese. There was no mention of Mao or the Chinese communists.

The Battle of China was the least effective of the three Ally films. More than a defense of China, it was an attack on Japan. As with other popular media, the film used racial epitaphs—"Japs," "nips," "little yellow men,"—to describe the Japanese. While the *Battle of Britain* was praised by Winston Churchill and played to audiences throughout Britain and *The Battle of Russia* received Stalin's blessing for play throughout the Soviet Union, *The Battle of China* was beset with problems from the time of its release. Attacked as a whitewash of Chiang, it was quickly withdrawn from circulation, and few people outside the armed services ever saw the film.

Released in 1945, the finale was *War Comes to America*, Capra's tribute to the American people. Divided into two parts, the film opened with Jamestown, Va., in 1607, when

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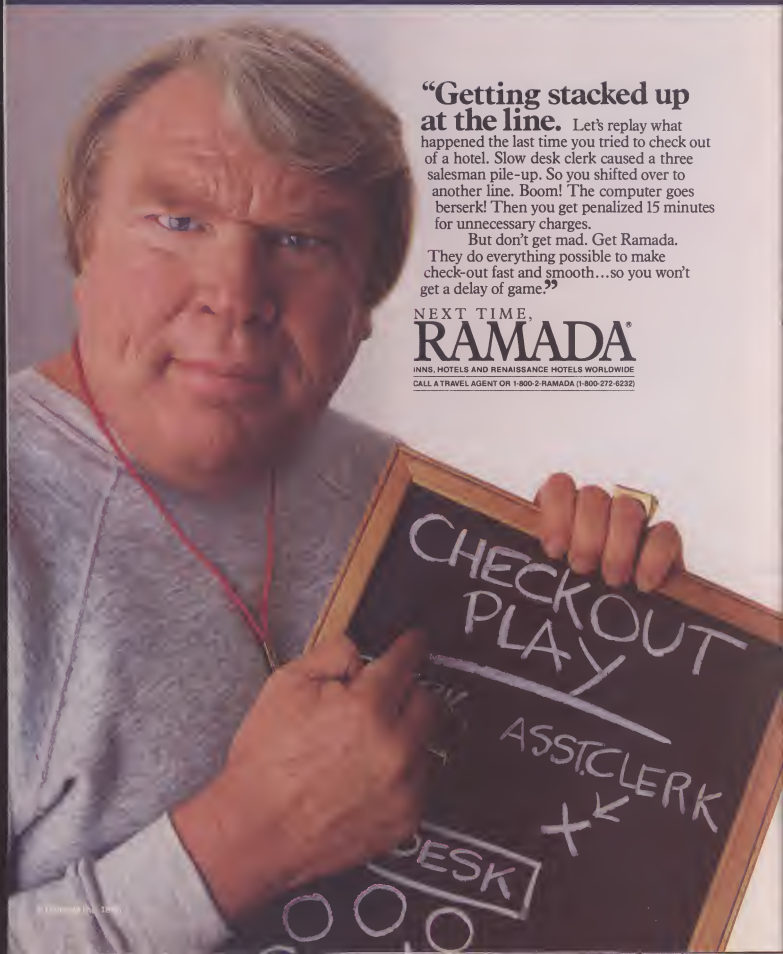

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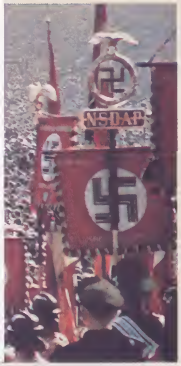

"Time and again Hitler—or one of his stooges—was shown speaking before a mass rally of Germans who erupted into a frenzy of Heil Hitlers," such as at this 1937 Buckeberg Harvest Festival in the Third Reich.

the first Americans arrived in quest of freedom and "carved new states" out of the great "virgin continent." The second half of the film reconstructed the decade from 1931 to 1941, illustrating the gradual shift in attitudes of "we the people" from isolationism to intervention. An emotional and symbolic view of America, the film stressed that Americans were unique because they believed that all men," the narrator told the troops. World War II was one have withstood the challenge to the idea of equality for all men,' the narrator told the troops. World War II was one more challenge to the Constitution, the "sacred charter of we the people."

To illustrate this, the film played heavily on "sacred and sentimental symbols" in American culture. The troops were shown re-created scenes of Valley Forge and Yorktown, where "the people" originally fought and died for freedom. From the establishment of "the new nation," the push westward into the "unoccupied wilderness" was presented as a salute to the ethnic populations that immigrated to America. The English, the Dutch, the Italians, the Poles, the Germans (with their "technical skills"), the Spanish ("the first to roam the great Southwest"), the Negroes ("picking cotton in the south"), and the Chinese all combined to build a great nation, the film claimed.

It is a curious view of American history and one that illustrates popular attitudes toward the nation. There is no mention of the American Indian in the film or in the *Why We Fight* series. The troops were told, as no doubt their civic texts in school had told them, that America was carved out of a great forest wilderness. The issues of slavery and discrimination toward blacks were avoided. Blacks appeared only briefly, as slaves picking cotton and as jazz musicians, both traditionally "acceptable" roles for blacks to have held in American history. In the ethnic descriptions, both the Germans and Italians were mentioned, but the Japanese were not. Certainly there was no reference to the Japanese-American internment camps.

The original purpose of all seven films had been to uplift the morale of the draftees. It is difficult to say whether the films accomplished that purpose. The Army did not consider itself a social science research bureau and did not conduct systematic, scientific audience surveys to determine the effectiveness of the films. The Army brass liked the films; they received critical acclaim both at home and abroad, and the troops preferred the films to lectures given by their officers. That was enough for the Army.

Several of the films played to civilian audiences throughout the country during the war. Their reception was at best lukewarm. Americans were saturated with news of World War II when they went to the movies: newsreels, government shorts urging them to support the war effort, cartoons mocking the enemy and feature films dramatizing the war in heroic terms made hour-long documentaries less than appealing. After a long day on the production front, Americans preferred the fictional tragedy of Greer Garson as Mrs. Miniver to the stark reality of *The Battle of Britain.*

Viewed 40-plus years after their production, the films stand as audio and visual documents on popular perceptions of the causes of World War II and of the Allied war goals. In presenting the Allies as democracies of the same cloth, the films did little to prepare the fighting troops or the civilian audiences for the complexities of the postwar world. The seven films offer a unique opportunity to study how America perceived itself, its allies and the enemy. For years the films were only available to scholars studying film technique or through expensive rental agencies. The video-tape revolution has dramatically changed that. For interested readers, all seven of the *Why We Fight* films are available on home-video tape and can be rented or purchased for minimal cost. □

Gregory D. Black is a dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Missouri/Kansas City, where he also teaches history.

Additional readings available: Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shape the World War II Movies, *by Gregory Black and Clayton Koppes;* Prelude to War: 'The Greatest Gangster Film Ever Filmed' *by Richard W. Steele;* An Historical and Descriptive Analysis of the 'Why We Fight' Series *by Thomas Bohn.*

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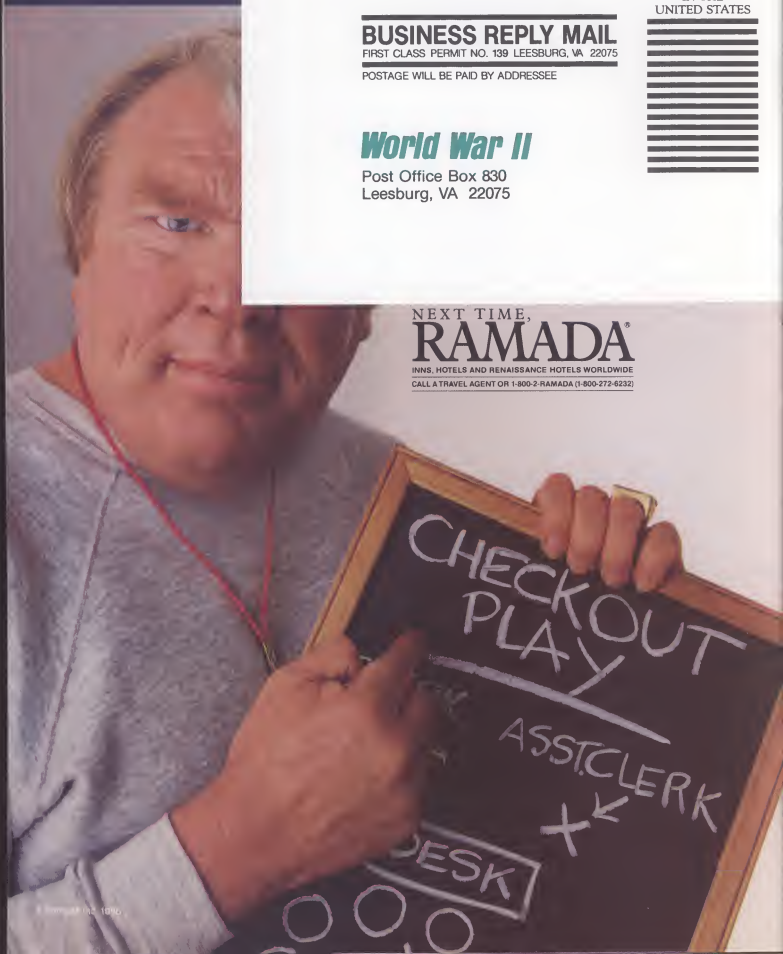

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The last days of Nazi Germany had impact on many millions, rather than Hitler alone.

By Blaine Taylor

Everyone knows that Nazi Germany fell in the spring of 1945, but what happened afterward to the peoples the collapse affected is not so well-known. Countless books have detailed the fall of the Third Reich—not only books, but numerous motion pictures and television dramas over the years have told the vivid story in all its lurid details: the surrounding of Berlin by the Red Army; the deaths of Hitler, Goebbels and Bormann in the underground bunker; the Allied wave from the west that linked up with the Russians, and the final, comic-opera government of the *Führer's* brief successor, Reich President and Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz.

Hitler's "Thousand-Year Reich" was crushed like an eggshell between the Western Allies moving East and the Red Army moving West. Here, U.S. Army units cross the Rhine River over a pontoon bridge in March 1945.

What, then, could possibly be new about this much-described topic? In the new study, *Last Days of the Third Reich: The Collapse of Nazi Germany, May 1945* by James Lucas (William Morrow and Co., 1987, $17.95), there's a great deal, actually. The main difference is that the author's emphasis—as opposed to most past studies—is not on the leaders, but on the ordinary people they led: the soldiers, civilians and displaced persons.

The crisply written, well-illustrated volume (77 black-and-white photos and four maps) particularly reveals what happened to the Germans, a tale largely untold until now. The citizens of Germany suffered the full vengeance of Hitler's earlier victims as the conquering Allied armies literally overran the Reich, while the *Volksdeutsche* (peasants who had settled all over Europe but who remained Germans in Allied eyes) were forcibly removed from lands they had lived on—for centuries in many cases.

The defeated German Army was routed despite a stiff resistance put up behind the Reich's "East Wall," designed to stem the Red Army. Many defenders held hopes of of an Anglo-American-Nazi alliance created to reinvade Eastern Europe. This mad dream of Hitler's has been ridiculed since 1945 by most historians as a shallow chimera, but Lucas says that most Germans at the time actually believed it to be a reality—a factor helping to explain why they held out so long in a hopeless military situation.

In 1945, for instance, both *Luftwaffe* Field Marshal Albert Kesselring and *Alpenkorps* General Julius Ringel of the *Wehrmacht* thought that U.S. General George S. Patton, Jr. would be amenable to such a plan—and the Russians thought so, too.

That spring of 1945 "the agony and killing went on," even after VE-Day, as German-sponsored Russian Cossacks were surrendered en masse to Stalin for execution. Author Lucas was a British infantryman in Austrian Carinthia, and thus personally witnessed many of the events he narrates here. Later, he worked in the British Military Government of Occupation, thus broadening his observer's vantage point. In time, he interviewed hundreds of former German soldiers about their personal experiences for this, his latest book.

The author of previous books on the German Army during World War II (such as *Alpine Elite* and *War on the Eastern Front, 1941-45*), Lucas is an historian with the Imperial War Museum in London.

His text is organized by fighting fronts. His Eastern area covers not only Berlin and Austria (where the German mountain troops became the last Axis forces engaged in combat in Europe), but also Kurland on the Baltic (where Heinz Guderian and Dönitz effected a superb military withdrawal by sea in desperate circumstances) and Prague (where the German Protectorate established in 1939 hardly experienced war at all, he notes, until the very last few days, seven years later).

In the Kurland episode related by author Lucas, a still-living Hitler was adamant as disaster stalked. "An evacuation of the troops in Kurland is out of the question," Hitler had ordered as Soviet troops closed in on Nazi Germany early in 1945. He fired his Army Chief of the General Staff—tank expert Guderian—over the thorny question. More than seven million persons—troops and civilians—thus would be condemned to the tender mercies of the advancing Red Army.

With the *Führer* soon a suicide in Berlin, however, his hand-picked successor as Reich President, Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, decided to rescind Hitler's prior order. States Lucas:

"Many hundreds of thousands of the soldiers of the Eastern Front perished in battle or failed to return to the West,

Continued on page 58

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UnderCover

Continued from page 8

Epp moving towards the city. As they fought their way into Munich on the first of May, they encountered some pockets of resistance, including the List Regiment Barracks of Türkenstrasse. They stormed the buildings and arrested all of the Red Army men inside, Hitler among them.

After about three days in detention with the revolutionaries, Hitler was spotted by an officer who had known him during the war. He was released and later volunteered to testify at a commission of inquiry set up by the 2nd Infantry Regiment. In short, Hitler became an informer. His testimony identified those fellow soldiers who had supported the soviet experiment and those who had fired on the rightist troops when they marched in. Hitler's testimony resulted in the executions of about 10 men. As a reward for his services Hitler was detailed to Section I b/p, the "Press and News Bureau," of the Political Department of the *Reichswehr's* VII (Munich) District Command. He was carried on the books of the List Regiment as a *Vertrauens Mann*, a confidential agent.

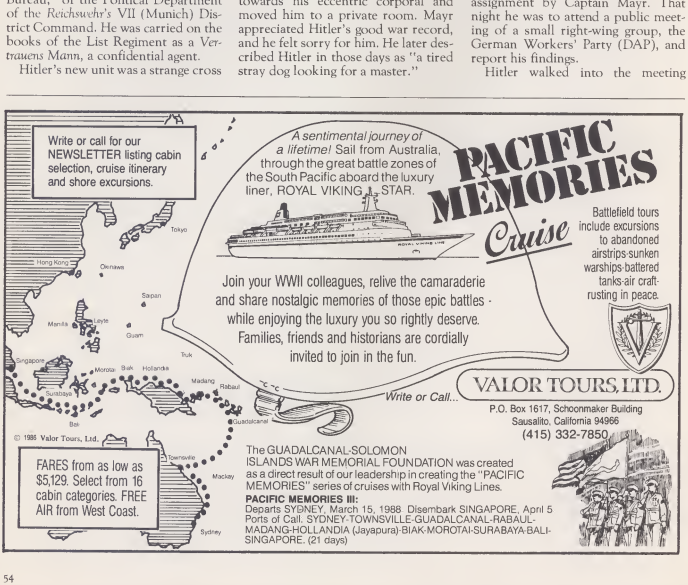
Hitler's new unit was a strange cross between a political-commissar group and a counter-intelligence unit. One of its missions was to investigate subversive activities among the troops and prevent the spread of socialist, pacifist or even democratic ideas. The other mission was to infiltrate and monitor the bewildering array of radical workers' organizations and splinter groups that were constantly spinning off from one another in Munich. These groups ran the entire political spectrum: racists, communists, anarchists and rabid nationalists. The leaders of the new *Reichswehr* were determined to return Germany to its former military glory and intended to exploit any political movement that would help them and crush any that stood in their way.

In his new unit Hitler was still the perpetual loner. He couldn't even get along with two fellow agents who were assigned to the same room at the barracks. They complained about his personal habits and the fact that he walked and talked in his sleep. Their commanding officer, Captain Karl Mayr, developed an indulgent attitude towards his eccentric corporal and moved him to a private room. Mayr appreciated Hitler's good war record, and he felt sorry for him. He later described Hitler in those days as "a tired stray dog looking for a master."

Before starting their new duties, Hitler and the other agents were sent to a special indoctrination course in "civic thinking" at the University of Munich. The course was conducted by a carefully selected group of instructors, among them Professor Karl Alexander von Mueller. After a lecture one day, von Mueller stopped to listen to an impromptu discussion group of his soldier-students. He was particularly intrigued by one shabby looking corporal who was haranguing the group on some point or other and holding the others spellbound. Von Mueller reported back to Mayr that he had a natural, albeit untrained, orator in his unit. That attention led to Hitler being temporarily detailed as an instructor to an indoctrination course for German POWs still returning from the recent war. All the while Hitler was gaining experience in the practical politics of persuasion.

After his stint as an instructor, Hitler, still a corporal, returned to the job of monitoring radical groups. On September 12, 1919, he was handed an assignment by Captain Mayr. That night he was to attend a public meeting of a small right-wing group, the German Workers' Party (DAP), and report his findings.

Hitler walked into the meeting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room of the Sterneckerbräu beer hall that evening and was unimpressed with what he saw. There were about 40 persons present. After the main speaker, Hitler got up to leave but stopped when he heard a speaker from the floor suggest that Bavaria should break off from the rest of Germany and form a Catholic union with Austria. This sent Hitler, a rabid pan-Germanist, into a frenzy. On the spot, he delivered a tirade of his own. Afterwards, DAP founder Anton Drexler rushed up to Hitler and gave him one of his own political pamphlets to read. Several days later, Hitler received an unsolicited party membership card in the mail.

Hitler made his report to Captain Mayr, who passed it on up to the council of high ranking military leaders and businessmen that met weekly at the Hotel Four Seasons to plan the rebuilding of Germany's military might. Since they could only achieve their goal with the support of the working classes, they were always interested in fostering the growth of right-wing worker's movements. A few days later Ludendorff personally appeared at Mayr's office and suggested that Hitler be ordered to join the DAP and build it up. It was theoretically illegal for soldiers to belong to political parties, but Mayr ordered Hitler to join (quite independently Hitler had decided to join in any case). He was allowed to use his room in the barracks as a working area, and he was given an expense account of 20 Marks a week from a secret Army fund. At that time the entire DAP treasury held only 7 Marks, 50 Pfennig.

Working on Army time, Hitler threw himself into the task. He gradually assumed more and more control of the fledgling party as his circle of contacts within the Army grew wider. Among those he now dealt with on a regular basis was Captain Ernst Roehm, a tough, battle-scared veteran of the trenches. Roehm's particular job in the Political Department was riding herd on the *Freikorps* and the various

Following the collapse of the Nazi-led "Beer Hall Putsch," Hitler and the chief conspirators were tried in Munich. Here, General Erich Ludendorff (second from right) enters the courtroom in unaccustomed civilian attire, as the citizen at left doffs his hat in respect.

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para-military groups, functioning as their quartermaster and their banker. Roehm steered many men from the various *Freikorps* into the DAP and helped form its first strongarm squads, from which the *Sturmabteilungen* (SA) would later grow. He also arranged for the DAP to buy its own newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, with *Reichswehr* funds. Paradoxically, Roehm was somewhat of a pariah within the officer

Hitler (center) is shown as the rising leader of the embryonic Nazi Party at the German Day Rally in September, 1923.

corps. Although he had an outstanding record as a frontline infantry commander, he was a homosexual. For his part, Hitler seemed to ignore this fact as long as Roehm was useful.

For almost seven months Hitler worked fulltime on DAP activities from his room in the barracks. In early 1920 Roehm replaced Mayr as Hitler's commanding officer, but he continued Mayr's practice of addressing Hitler by the familiar "*du*" form. This was an unheard-of degree of informality between a corporal and captains. On April 1, 1920, Hitler left the Army to work fulltime for the rapidly growing DAP. Speculation is that the 32-year-old ex-corporal was even then still acting under Army orders, but that has never been proved. He moved into a room by the Isar and spent all of his days working at party headquarters. Since he was not being paid anything by the party then, what he lived on is a mystery. Again, it is most likely he still was being subsidized by the Army.

There can be little doubt that without the Army's heavy patronage, Hitler would have had little chance of building up what later became the National Socialist German Worker's Party (NSDAP). For the next 23 years Hitler's path would cross with the Army's many times, and each time it would learn the depth of his ingratitude.

During the Munich Beer Hall Putsch in November 1923, Hitler received active support from several members

of the *Reichswehr's* Munich Command Group, who were later tried along with him. At that point it looked like the end for Hitler and his movement. Hitler was sentenced to a term in Landsberg Prison, Roehm was sacked from the Army, and Ludendorff (still the national hero) was given a slap on the wrist. But a few years later, Hitler was back and with him, Roehm, as head of the SA.

After he came to power in 1933, Hitler no longer needed Roehm and his brownshirt thugs. They were, in fact, now a liability. Roehm, still nursing a grudge against the Army, envisioned a combined Army-SA with himself as Commander-in-Chief. Hitler, on the other hand, needed the Army's support to consolidate his power. The Army's price? The SA. Roehm's homosexuality now became a convenient issue, and during the "Night of the Long Knives" (June 30, 1934), the entire SA leadership was rounded up and jailed. Roehm was executed a few days later and the SA ceased to be a power in national politics.

A few years later, it was the Army's turn. In 1938 its two top generals, Minister of War Werner von Blomberg and Army Commander-in-Chief Werner Freiherr von Fritsch, were disgraced and sacked on trumped-up charges. Rumor campaigns were started that Blomberg's new wife was a former prostitute and that Fritsch was a homosexual. The Blomberg-Fritsch affair undermined the spirit of the officer corps. Shortly after, Hitler himself assumed the role of Commander-in-Chief of the German Armed Forces (*Wehrmacht*), and all German soldiers and officers were required to swear a personal oath of loyalty to the *Führer*. Meanwhile, the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) was rapidly becoming what the Army had feared most of the SA, a rival army within the state.

The Army again felt Hitler's wrath in the aftermath of the abortive July 20 assasination plot in 1944. In the purge that followed many of the Army's senior officers died on meathooks and its greatest field commander, Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, was forced to commit suicide. The final insult came during the last days of the Third Reich. Hitler directly blamed the Army and its leaders for the impending defeat. As a possible last jab at those who "betrayed" him, he appointed a Navy officer (Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz) as his successor.

The German Army was Hitler's first benefactor, and among his last victims. And Captain Karl Mayr, Hitler's first protector? He died in Buchenwald in 1945.

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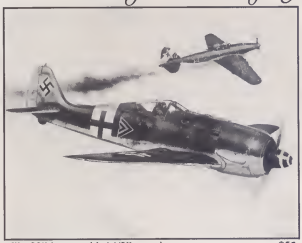

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Continued from page 52

but in the gloom of those days there shone the bright beacon lighted by the German Navy, which carried out what was, perhaps, the largest evacuation in history (Kurland), an operation almost unknown to the peoples of the West . . . The evacuation had brought more than two million people out . . ."

There was ample tragedy, too, though: "Forty-two generals, more than 8,000 other officers and more than 181,000 rank and file . . . passed into captivity from which . . . a great many of them did not return." The civilians suffered, also, as the author notes: ". . . one vessel, the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, was sunk by a Russian submarine with a loss of life that has been estimated at 8,000 people."

His section on the Southern Front, meanwhile, details the final fighting in Yugoslavia (where the exultant communist legions of partisan leader Tito quickly established a Red regime), and in once-allied Italy.

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Nuremberg Trials of the major Nazi war criminals, but comparatively little has been produced on the equally important trials of their opposite numbers—the Japanese war lords and industrialists—in Tokyo.

Now, however, comes a superb volume by a former United Press correspondent who covered the entirety of the trials, and who was one of the few reporters allowed to visit such prisoners as Premier Hideki Tojo in their cells at Tokyo's Sugamo Prison.

Unfortunately, the author died shortly after completing his excellent manuscript. The work that his survives its creator does much to place the Tokyo Trials in their proper perspective vis-a-vis Nüremberg. It is the first book to actually detail the daily courtroom drama, with thorough coverage of the full range of Japan's crimes both before and during the Pacific War with the United States and its Allies: the Rape of Nanking in China, the Bataan Death March, the use of slave labor to build the Siam-Burma Death Railway (including the famous Bridge over the River Kwai) and the atrocious treatment of Allied prisoners-of-war that shocked the West.

But, asks the author: "Who remembers the mass murder of 18,000 Filipino men, women and children in the town of Lipa? Or the murder of 450 French and Vietnamese POWs at Langson, Vietnam, where the Japanese first machinegunned them in the legs and then dispatched the squirming targets in a bayonet drill?"

Like the Nüremberg Trials, those in Tokyo were also long and complicated, Brackman notes in his readable and authoritative account. "It lasted more than two and a half years," he writes. "More than 419 witnesses appeared, including the last Emperor of China. It took more than seven months for the judges to write their judgment, which alone ran to 1,218 pages in length . . . The cast of characters testifying in Tokyo was largely unknown to Westerners, translation created special problems, and it is generally agreed that the trial was poorly conducted and badly organized."

And what of the reputations of the men tried and convicted in Tokyo? In 1978, 14 of them were secretly enshrined, says the author, as national martyrs in a controversial ceremony at Japan's most revered Shinto temple, while the Japanese people themselves, he maintains, unlike the Germans of today, seem almost unaware of their former leaders' war crimes.

In addition to its illuminating text, *The Other Nüremberg* provides readers with a map of the courtroom, as

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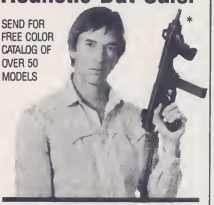

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They displaced 33 tons and had a length of 80 feet, a beam of 20 feet, a draft of five feet, and a complement of 14 crewmen.

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Armament

Continued from page 10

maximum arcs of fire, and suitable ground around the proposed forts for antitank defenses. Test sites were built beginning in 1928, and the Line proper went into construction in 1929.

Closer to the frontier, along roads and railway lines most likely to be used by the Germans in a surprise attack, were small reinforced barracks permanently occupied by mobile troops whose duties were to blow up rail and road bridges and cause blockages at cross roads. Two miles behind these were outpost blocks of concrete, with naval-type guns of up to 2½ inches in caliber. With their permanent garrisons, the outposts' job was to hold up any invasion until the main forts could be completely manned. The outpost guns commanded all the principal approaches to the fortresses, and the roads leading to the fortresses were equipped with antitank obstacles.

The fortresses themselves were immense affairs in two parts from a quarter mile to a mile and a quarter apart. The largest had garrisons of 2,000 men and mounted guns from 75mm to 135mm capable of firing from two to seven miles—to the very borders of Germany. Turrets of chrome-nickel steel, seven inches thick, projected at the top as firing chambers for the artillery. These were sealed during firing and boasted forced air ventilation, which resulted in a permanent, violent draft. Gunners had to be issued sheepskin coats, even in the summer, to counter the wind in the turrets.

The fortresses were interconnected by underground galleries in which the "Metro," an internal railway, ran in tunnels some eight feet wide and ten feet high. The extensive underground tunneling resulted in considerable dampness, so all wiring had to be carefully sealed. The electrical systems, supporting huge air-conditioning plants, were interconnected and mutually supporting. Each fort had its own generating plant, too, in case of failure. The air in the forts was pressurized to resist the entry of poison gas, so devastating in World War I.

Water for the fortresses came from deep wells within them, with the water pumped up to steel-lined reservoirs, to prevent leakage under shell fire. There were barracks for officers and enlisted men, cramped, but liveable. Medical facilities, storage for ammunition, even sunlamps for personnel who seldom saw daylight, were included.

A diagram of one of the larger forts published just before World War II

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WWII137

The Maginot Line—named after the French defense minister who feared another German invasion of Alsace-Lorraine—was the most extensive system of permanent fortifications in the world, and seemed invincible to attack—as, indeed, it was. Here, French Interval Troops ride in comfort on the underground "Metro" subway that connected the concrete bunkers and fortresses.

shows eight levels to the fort. At the top is the turret with artillery and machine guns. Under that is a large space with quarters for officers and enlisted men, plus the motors that controlled the air conditioning and lighting. The next level down was the telephone bureau (all the forts were connected by underground telephone lines, since radio communications would have had to be encoded). A gymnasium completed this third level.

The fourth level held another recreation area, with provisions for showing movies, plus storage. Below this was the hospital. An underground garage for transport was on the sixth level, and under that was the "Metro," the subway to connecting forts and outposts. The lowest, eighth, level was for ammunition storage.

There was a separate underground hangar space for aircraft, and the entrance road didn't end until inside the fort in an airlock for added protection against gas attack.

As one visiting British officer said, it was "like a submarine." As if to reinforce the similarity, the men of the Maginot were divided into watches, as on shipboard.

One Achilles heel of the fortresses was the periscope observation system. The system was copied in Czech fortifications, and by the time the Germans assaulted the Maginot Line in 1940, they had captured the Czech forts and studied them. They realized that targeting the periscopes would blind the forts, and sometimes kill or wound the observer, in spite of the foot-thick steel protection he had.

But another German technique for taking fortifications, so successful against Belgian forts in 1940, could not work against the Maginot Line. This was the assault by airborne troops. Dropped onto the tops of the forts they could lower explosives to the gun apertures and kill or wound the gunners.

The forts of the Maginot Line, however, had been carefully sited to allow the firing of each to overlap its neighbor. When one fort was under heavy fire that forced it to keep its turrets down, another fort could take over most of its targets. Also, each fort was constructed to withstand direct heavy fire of its neighbor. Thus, when Maginot's feared assault did come, German attacks were driven off time and again by shellfire from a neighboring Maginot fort or outpost.

Preparations for World War II can be dated from 1935, when Hitler secretly ordered the start of a plan for the military occupation of Germany's

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Third Segment: Rommel and staff along with men of the SS Leibstandarte. German defenders at Salerno shell Allied landing beaches. Rescue of Mussolini by Skorzeny and German paratroopers, departure via plane, and his greeting by Hitler, Goering, and Von Ribbentrop. You've heard so much about this rescue, now you can see it as it really happened.

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Rhineland. The Rhineland had been evacuated by the Allies, but under the Versailles Treaty was still demilitarized. The adjoining Haguenau sector of the Maginot Line had been finished, its armament installed in 1935.

When Hitler moved into the Rhineland in March 1936, the crisis caused the French to occupy this part of the Maginot Line. The occupying troops found the forts unheated, the walls dripping moisture, and the lighting inadequate. When the crisis ended—German proposals for creation of demilitarized zones on the borders with France and Belgium helped pacify France—the forts were again vacated for needed improvements.

The year 1937 saw further improvements in the Maginot Line—and training by the French Navy in the operation of self-contained units. In March 1938, the Maginot Line was fully garrisoned as Hitler browbeat Austria into his *Anschluss.* This alert lasted through May, and in September the "frontaliers" (local residents who manned the Line) had to be called up again. The French Army now learned of "frontaliers'" anger at yet another call-up—many reported late or drunk. The drunkenness was not repeated the following spring when the "frontaliers" had to be called back to the Line yet again for the crisis caused by Hitler's occupation of Czechoslovakia. (And now the Germans had their chance to studv Czech fortifications. their design based upon the French Maginot Line.)

On August 25, 1939, as Hitler's war of nerves with Poland reached its height, sirens sounded along the Maginot Line at 2 a.m.—France's Order 41 had been put in effect. The civilian population was to be cleared from the forward zone. By 5 a.m. sleepy children, uncomprehending old women and tearful young wives had been bundled into trains headed west.

Hitler disregarded the warnings of France and Britain and invaded Poland on September 1. An ultimatum from the Allies to withdraw from Poland received no reply—Maginot Line troops were advised that "a state of war has not been confirmed," and "should the enemy penetrate" into French territory, he "should be repulsed with rifle fire only."

Not until September 6, three days after France had declared war, were the forces of the Maginot Line advised of the state of war with Germany—the forts still were forbidden to open fire without a direct order from the Commandant of the Fortified Sector.

In the months-long "phony war" that followed, boredom set in.

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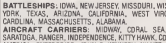

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That ended on May 10, 1940. Hitler's desire for an offensive in western Europe the previous November had been frustrated by bad weather, but in March of 1940 he adopted the bold suggestion of General Erich von Manstein that an attack through the Ardennes would be practicable for Germany's new tank forces. The Germans pushed their strongest army group through these forests: Army Group A, some 44 divisions, seven of them armored, was opposed by only 16 French divisions.

At the same time, Army Group B—two armies with three armored divisions, supported by parachute troops—struck the Belgian and Dutch armies in a sweep north of Liege. Army Group C was kept facing the Maginot Line to prevent its troops from reinforcing other French forces.

The Dutch collapsed in four days. The German air weapon was highly effective in breaking Belgian resistance, especially in dropping parachute troops on Belgian forts. By May 11 the Belgian front was broken, and the next night German troops had crossed the Franco-Belgian frontier.

On May 13, the brilliant German tank tactician Heinz Guderian crossed the Meuse River near Sedan, as waves of German dive bombers shattered French resistance. Two days later Guderian's tanks had punched through the French defenses and were driving for the English Channel. This sample of *blitzkrieg* severed communication between the Allies, north and south. By May 24, Guderian was crossing the canal line close to Dunkirk, from which the Royal Navy, with amateur assistance, was able to evacuate almost 340,000 Allied troops to England to fight another day.

The French still had 17 divisions holding the Maginot Line, along with 49 others left intact elsewhere. They had lost a million prisoners in the Northern France campaign. Now facing the French were Germany's 130 infantry and 10 armored divisions. After a realignment of forces, the Germans began a new offensive on June 5; by the ninth, General Erwin Rommel's tanks were over the Seine, isolating the by-passed Maginot Line and forcing the evacuation of the French Government from Paris.

French Premier Paul Reynaud, now in Bordeaux, resigned on June 16, to be replaced by the 84-year-old Marshal Pétain. The isolated troops in the Maginot Line momentarily were comforted, sure that the man responsible for the "miracle of Verdun" would have another miracle up his sleeve.

The Maginot Line had suffered

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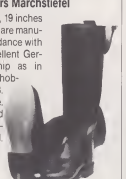

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increasing attacks by Army Group C, repelling them without difficulty and with heavy German losses. Attacks on the Maginot Line continued to be beaten off by accurate artillery fire, pre-sighted before the war, while bomb damage from air attacks was superficial. But the lack of interval troops (assigned to the ground between the forts) made the fortresses vulnerable to attack from the rear.

As Marshal Pétain considered an armistice, the Maginot Line still held. At the Four-a-Chaux fortress, a German artillery battery was detected moving into position in front. The 135mm guns of the fort's turret blew the battery sky high—it never fired a single round.

June 19 began with a tremendous dawn attack on the Schoenenbourg advanced posts. The Maginot defenders waited for the German assault to reach the already-abandoned advance posts, and then the fort's turrets opened up, stopping the attack cold. Two German prisoners, brought into the Schoenenbourg fortress, commented that the fort's gunners "could hit a coursing hare."

Pétain's armistice was signed on June 22, to take effect on June 25. The French forces still intact and fighting by this time consisted only of the Army of the Alps, engaged against Italian troops, and the garrison and few interval troops of the Maginot Line.

The Germans had outflanked the Line and had pierced it, once the interval troops had almost entirely been withdrawn. But the Line held—even in the face of German demands for surrender on June 25 when the armistice took effect. It took orders from the French High Command to end the resistance of the indomitable fortresses, in accordance with the armistice terms.

The Maginot Line did protect Alsace-Lorraine, as it was built to do. The Line also insured that Germany would attack through the Low Countries, where the French military machine, with England's help, was supposed to deploy and hold the Germans. Although the ponderous French Army, led by unimaginative tacticians, was no match for the German *blitzkrieg*, the attack through Belgium assured that England would join in the fighting on France's side.

After the surrender of the unconquered Maginot Line fortresses, the victors toured them. *Luftwaffe* pilots, convinced by aerial photographs that their attacks had destroyed the forts, were chagrined to find the Line whole. Moreover, hardly a Maginot gun had been knocked out of action. □

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